

January 23, 2026

TRPA Oversight Committee

Dear Honorable Members of the Legislative Committee,

I'm a long-time resident and homeowner of more than 20 years in North Lake Tahoe.

My bias on public policy in the Tahoe basin always leans toward protecting its fragile environment, natural beauty, public safety and the quality of life in this unique national treasure for future generations. Indeed, these are the very reasons why TRPA was created.

Unfortunately, I feel the need to first say that I am vexed by the labels applied to Tahoe basin residents who speak up about TRPA's loss of direction. "Rich NIMBYs," "Do Nothings," "Neighborhood crazies," etc. are what we hear – and, sadly, have even read in emails between officials disclosed by FOIA requests.

More befuddling is that people like me -- your Nevada constituents -- can be dismissed with a trite pejorative and a mere wave of a hand. Yet we volunteer our precious time advocating policy for the lake we love, which often goes against any personal financial interests we may have.

Because of the mischaracterization of residents, I feel I must first defend myself from the Tahoe resident stereotype. I'm the son of an immigrant. I grew up in the Midwest. I earned a BA and, later in life, MBA from public universities. I served on active duty in the military for seven years and received a retirement as an officer in the U.S. Navy Reserve. I am a lifetime member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. My civilian career has been in corporate communications, working in companies ranging from start-ups to Global 100 companies, mostly in the auto industry (primarily Chrysler in Detroit and Mercedes-Benz in Germany). Later in my career I founded and ran my own consulting company for 20+ years.

Get to know other residents, our neighbors, and you'll hear similar back stories: people with vast professional experience, multi-ethnic backgrounds and political views. We are not Gadflies or nut jobs. We are also not "the billionaires on the lake." Such people do not show up at public meetings. They speak directly to the TRPA through their attorneys and lobbyists.

In short, we are serious people participating in our imperfect democratic process in the ways we can. This is why I respect and thank all of you on this subcommittee. You are very much the same. In fact, oversight of the public interest and public monies is one of the most important functions of democratic governance. And, like us, you're doing so at what is a net loss in personal time and money.

OK, off my soapbox.

My chief concern is that TRPA has lost its way. It has fallen prey to regulatory capture, lobbyist influence, mission creep and bureaucratic expansion. It does not meet its primary objectives, effectively use its immense budget, nor does it really answer to anyone. In fact, the only body that has any oversight authority over TRPA is this one.

So, as you go through your oversight process over next few months, I respectfully ask you to do so with some healthy skepticism:

IF you feel your oversight meeting agendas, the tours you will take and the people and organizations you are will be asked by TRPA to meet with – those who will have much longer than 120 seconds of your time than we are given for public comment – are just “overly curated, PR’ed or, specifically, lacking of scientific evidence” ...

IF in sidebar conversations and private phone calls you’re hearing Tahoe residents written off as those “noisy or crazy NIMBYs who are just a vocal minority” as described above ...

IF you find you’re being steered to believe the only “legitimate voices” are those of lawyers, lobbyists or organizations – including those formed as non-profits with benevolent-sounding names – whose primary interests are commercial development, growing tourism and related tax revenues, etc. ...

IF you are not considering the irony that TRPA – an agency first and foremost founded to be an environmental watchdog – is being taken to court by grassroots environmental organizations for the policies it pursues ...

IF you’re not hearing of or asking hard questions about urban planning models wedged into a rural environment; regulatory capture; the problems of growing overtourism and congestion; microplastics and trash in the lake and basin ...

IF you’re only hearing of policies designed to get more people into the basin and little of how to get them out in a wildfire evacuation ...

THEN I would hope you see the same red flags concerning the TRPA’s priorities so many of us who live in the basin do. And you should fear that your function of oversight also risks being co-opted or otherwise compromised.

And I hope you will take the constructive input provided by Tahoe residents seriously.

Finally, my wife, Pamela, and I have written numerous, well-researched articles detailing how TRPA has gone astray in the recent past. Google the Greek name “Tsigdinos” and “Tahoe” to find them. This Reno Gazette Journal article titled ["Cronyism Puts Tahoe at Severe Risk"](#) is a good start.

Thank you.

Alex Tsigdinos

LCDR, USNR (Ret.)