

MEMORANDUM

DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS
County of Placer

TO: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS DATE: October 20, 2009
FROM: KEN GREHM / BOB COSTA
SUBJECT: LAKE TAHOE TOTAL MAXIMUM DAILY LOAD PRESENTATION

ACTION REQUESTED / RECOMMENDATION

This is an informational item only; no action is requested.

BACKGROUND / SUMMARY

Restoring the historic clarity of Lake Tahoe's waters has been a long-standing goal of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board (Lahontan) and the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). For many years, jurisdictions within the Tahoe Basin have been working together to identify the causes of declining lake clarity, and to implement programs and strategies to reverse the long-term impacts.

Declining water clarity has been attributed to the combined effect of fine sediment in suspension and algal production from increased phosphorus, and nitrogen in the lake. Human occupation and activity in the Tahoe watershed are the principal sources of these constituents, and thus the target of the Lake Tahoe Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reduction strategy. At this time, fine sediment has the greatest impact on loss of lake clarity and is the focus of the next twenty year pollutant reduction strategy.

Under the proposed TMDL strategy, each jurisdiction will have established annual "target" levels for fine sediment reduction. Methodologies for implementation will vary, but will include continuing implementation and maintenance of water quality improvement projects such as those implemented by Placer County over the past 25 years. The TMDL will also become part of the County's NPDES permit for the Tahoe basin, upon its renewal in 2010.

Harold Singer, Executive Officer of the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board, is here today to provide your Board with a brief presentation on the Lake Tahoe TMDL, and to answer any questions that you may have regarding the TMDL and its implementation.

ENVIRONMENTAL

There is no action related to this informational item, therefore, provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) do not apply.

FISCAL IMPACT

Implementation of actions necessary for compliance with established TMDL requirements will have significant costs, but include many actions already being implemented through the Public Works Department's water quality programs. Since 1984, Placer County has constructed over 50 water quality improvement projects at Lake Tahoe, at a cost of over \$35 million. Another 16 capital projects are currently programmed for the region over the next five years, totaling over \$200 million. Current maintenance costs are around \$100,000 per year for these projects; this cost will increase as new facilities are constructed.

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