

September 18, 2024

The Honorable Tom Tiffany
Chairman
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Joe Neguse
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Federal Lands
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Tiffany and Ranking Member Neguse:

As the leaders of the Tahoe Partnership, a collection of public and private partners dedicated to protecting Lake Tahoe, we write today to share our strong support for the *Lake Tahoe Restoration Reauthorization Act* (LTRA) (H.R. 1274, S. 612).

This bipartisan legislation would extend the expiration of the current *Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2016* to September 30, 2034. This will provide another decade for Congress to appropriate the remaining funds from the original authorization of \$415 million to be utilized through the Environmental Improvement Program (EIP) for conservation and maintenance purposes of Lake Tahoe and its surrounding areas.

The USDA Forest Service owns nearly 80 percent of the land in the Lake Tahoe watershed, and the LTRA provides the federal share for environmental restoration projects in partnership with more than 80 partners including California, Nevada, local governments, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, non-profit organizations, and the private sector.

The EIP has become one of the nation's most successful landscape restoration initiatives, serving as a model for other regional conservation partnerships. Extending the authorization will ensure critical EIP projects and programs to restore water clarity, mitigate wildfires, fight invasive species, and improve forest health can continue unhindered. The funding goes hand in hand with private, state, and local funding to keep Lake Tahoe vibrant and thriving.

Congress passed the *Lake Tahoe Restoration Act of 2016* as part of the *Water Infrastructure Improvements for the Nation Act* (P.L. 114-322; WIIN Act), building upon the successes of the previous authorization in 2000. The WIIN Act included language to amend the LTRA of 2000 and authorize up to \$415 million in federal appropriations over seven years, through September 30, 2024. Since 2016, \$121.8 million has been appropriated for Lake Tahoe restoration projects, about 29 percent of the total authorization.

To date, the \$121.8 million in LTRA funding has catalyzed more than \$500 million in tribal, state, local, and private matching funds. This successful collaboration has resulted in more than 21,000 acres of forest health treatment, 300 plus acres of essential wetlands restored, more than 500,000 lbs. of fine sediment and pollution prevented annually from flowing into the lake, and 51,000 boats

inspected for invasive species among other critical projects implemented by more than 80 partners. Additionally, the EIP supports 1,700 jobs annually and generates \$1.6 million in economic output for every \$1 million in spending.

The timing of this hearing is critical as we approach the expiration of the current authorization. For a quarter century, the LTRA has enjoyed bipartisan, bicameral sponsorship and the support of local jurisdictions. With nearly 80 percent of the Lake Tahoe watershed under federal ownership, congressional backing is essential to restoring and protecting the lake for our small mountain communities and the tens of millions of visitors from around the world we welcome each year.

The Tahoe Partnership appreciates your leadership and support for Lake Tahoe. We all benefit from the successful collaboration between all sectors of government along with the Washoe Tribe, environmental non-profits, and the private sector. With your continued support, we can ensure that Lake Tahoe remains a national treasure for future generations.

Sincerely,

