COUNTY OF EL DORADO

330 Fair Lane
Placerville, CA 95667
(530) 621-5390
(530) 622-3645 Fax

SUZANNE ALLEN DE SANCHEZ
Clerk of the Board

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

December 6, 2011

TO: Honorable Board Members
California Regional Water Control Board, Lahontan Region

FR: Supervisor Norma Santiago, presented on behalf of the Board of Supervisors for the County of El Dorado

RE: Public Comment at the December 6th Lahontan Region Board Meeting

Good Morning Honorable Board Members and thank you for giving the County of El Dorado an opportunity to comment on the Draft Municipal National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit.

I am Supervisor Norma Santiago, the District V supervisor, representing the entire board who are officially convened here today, Supervisors Knight, Sweeney, Nutting and Briggs along with our Clerk of the Board. And, as an **unofficial** adjunct, I am also the Chair of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, a board member on the California Tahoe Conservancy, and a Lake Tahoe resident for nearly 30 years. In fact, this board of supervisors represents several generations of family who have lived in the County of El Dorado since the 1800s.

I make that point because the health of Lake Tahoe is not only a matter of policy, it is indeed a very personal matter to us all.

As you will read in the letter signed by Chairman Nutting, the county is committed to environmental improvement programs and has taken a leadership role in the effort of implementing sediment reduction through best management practices in the Tahoe Basin since 1982 and we have no intention to alter our efforts toward restoring lake clarity.

We agree with the objectives of the Total Maximum Daily Load Program, and agree that a common public good is served with every inch of clarity achieved in Lake Tahoe, but we cannot agree with an incomplete management system and permit compliance tracking, accounting, methodology, and modeling processes that we have not been allowed to fully analyze. Later today our staff will present in greater detail our specific concerns.

Submitted by N. Santiago
#33
at Board Hearing of 12/6/11

11-1394.B.1

Essentially, the Lahontan Quality Control Board is in a position to allow the county more time to review and properly address the details of the TMDL Program and Lake Clarity Crediting Program.

What has been created in the TMDL Management System are tools that lack scientific backing, that are not integrated, are duplicative and/or inefficient and will require tremendous administrative staff time to analyze and implement.

You are proposing, as the draft permit is currently worded, two programs instead of one, asking the county to underwrite and implement processes that are unreasonable, not fully understood, and will require additional time, costs, expertise and oversight.

This is Lake Tahoe, not the Bay Area. Our processes are very different, better defined, refined for the lake specifically, and uniquely focused. We cannot be expected to meet the standards that are more aligned with large, polluting, industrial communities completely unrelated to the Tahoe Basin environment.

A 'one size fits all' approach imposes unreasonable county administrative oversight and costs that will, in fact, prohibit implementation of the permit objectives, programs and management system. As written in the current draft permit, the costs of administration and oversight will deter the county's efforts in creating real, on the ground, improvements. **The administration costs that we will incur in the TMDL Management System to track compliance within the Crediting Program alone will burden the county's budget enough that it will significantly affect the entire program implementation.** Furthermore, other forest management agencies in the Basin have not been required to comply at the same level that the counties and cities are. We see this as a significant inequity.

If you go through with the draft permit today, the predictable result for the county, because of these unnecessary administrative costs, will be layoffs in the transportation department, roads will not be fixed in compliance with the requirements and we may be forced to do very little toward our common goals.

Simply stated, you have a process that impedes progress. When that happens, nothing gets done. Who loses? We all do: The constituents and the lake.

You must, as a responsible, thoughtful, intelligent board, see this from that perspective. We are not threatening inaction by any means but we will be forced, due to extreme budgetary constraints, to put you on public notice that if you impose unachievable standards on the County, that little or no action in certain areas is a real possibility.

Your board has the opportunity today to delay adoption of this draft permit until these issues can be better addressed. We ask that you consider, with further county staff input, more realistic and implementable processes, management system and integration. You have the power to make this happen, and we are here as an entire board of supervisors, hoping to compel you with a unified front, to delay adoption of the draft permit as written and give the county more time review and return with productive input on compliance.

Again, thank you again, honorable board members, for your thoughtful consideration of our request. We pledge our continued support and dedication to lake clarity and look forward to working with you on a more reasonable solution.