

October 19, 2026

October 20, 2026
Placer County Board of Supervisors
175 Fulweiler Avenue
Auburn, CA 95603

Re: Agenda Item 6.A - Expanded Polystyrene, Single-Use Plastic Food Serviceware, and Water Bottle Regulations in Eastern Placer County

Dear Chair Landon and Members of the Board of Supervisors,

On behalf of the League to Save Lake Tahoe (Keep Tahoe Blue), thank you for the opportunity to comment on Agenda Item 6.A. Keep Tahoe Blue strongly supports introduction and adoption of the proposed ordinance. It is a practical, regionally aligned step that will keep preventable plastic waste out of Lake Tahoe, the Truckee River, beaches, trails, and communities throughout eastern Placer County.

Since 1957, Keep Tahoe Blue has worked to protect and restore the environmental health, sustainability, and clarity of Lake Tahoe. Our staff and volunteers see the plastic pollution problem firsthand, and we have also spent the past year listening directly to the businesses that would implement this ordinance. The conclusion is clear: the pollution is real, workable solutions already exist, and the community is ready to move forward.

Plastic pollution does not stay where it is dropped

The Truckee River is Lake Tahoe's only outlet. New research led by the Desert Research Institute found microplastics at every Truckee River sampling site. Average concentrations were nearly ten times higher during spring flows than in fall, indicating that runoff and higher water are flushing plastic from the surrounding landscape and riverbed. Polyethylene and polypropylene, common materials used in consumer products and packaging, were the dominant plastics identified. **The researchers concluded that reducing single-use plastic throughout the Truckee River Basin is critical to protecting water quality.**¹

These particles begin as familiar items: bottles, bags, wrappers, takeout materials, utensils, and fragments of polystyrene. Unlike many pollution problems, we know a major part of the source and can prevent it. The ordinance before you targets items that are frequently used for only minutes but persist in the environment and break into smaller pieces that are increasingly difficult, and ultimately impossible, to remove.

Our cleanup data show why prevention matters

Keep Tahoe Blue staff and volunteers have recorded every piece of trash they have collected for over a decade and 2,800 litter cleanups. In Placer County and have tallied 2,999 plastic bottles across 218 recorded cleanups in Placer County from 2023 through 2026 so far: 480 bottles in 2023, 750 in 2024, 990 in 2025, and over 900 so far in 2026 with about 40 cleanups. We have seen similar increasing trends in polystyrene and all types of plastics. These rising counts are not an argument for doing more cleanup alone. It is evidence that cleanup efforts cannot keep pace with the continuous rise in single-use disposable products.

¹ DRI, "Microplastics Concentrations in the Truckee River Surge During High Spring Flows" (Sept. 21, 2026). <https://www.dri.edu/microplastics-concentrations-in-the-truckee-river/>

Tahoe-wide, Keep Tahoe Blue cleanup records also consistently identify plastic bottles, polystyrene pieces, utensils, straws, wrappers, and takeout foodware among the most common items volunteers remove. Every pound collected represents time, volunteer effort, and public resources spent after pollution has already reached Tahoe's environment. **Source reduction is the more effective solution.**

The County asked for business input, and businesses responded

County staff and Keep Tahoe Blue have conducted extensive outreach to eastern Placer businesses. The County staff report states that approximately 60 of roughly 120 identified businesses were contacted by December 2025, with generally supportive feedback.

When the Board asked for additional evidence of business support, our Keep Tahoe Blue team went back into the community. **More than 40 Tahoe-area businesses have now signed on in support**, including lodging properties, resorts, restaurants, retailers, and other locally rooted businesses. The North Tahoe Community Alliance Board also voted unanimously to support an eastern Placer ordinance addressing single-use plastic water bottles and expanded polystyrene. The County asked us to show that businesses support moving forward. We did. *Letter and business sign-ons attached.*

This support matters because Tahoe's environment is also the foundation of the local economy. Businesses understand that visitors come for clean water, scenic beaches, healthy forests, and a community known for stewardship. A consistent regional standard is easier to communicate and implement than a patchwork, especially because Truckee and South Lake Tahoe already have similar requirements.

A practical approach with time to prepare

The ordinance targets some of the most common forms of litter found in Tahoe while providing practical alternatives, including our uniquely high-quality Tahoe Tap water place of single-use bottled water. It also includes reasonable exemptions, including emergencies and situations where bottled water is necessary to protect public health and safety.

With an April 2027 implementation date and an education-first rollout, businesses will have time to adapt, access technical support, and transition to more sustainable options. Keep Tahoe Blue looks forward to helping with business outreach, visitor education, and promotion of refill locations as the ordinance is implemented. We appreciate County staff's work to develop this ordinance in partnership with the community.

We respectfully urge the Board to introduce the ordinance as proposed and return it for final adoption

Placer County has the opportunity to close a major regional gap, reduce pollution before it reaches the environment, support a consistent visitor experience, and protect the Lake that sustains our communities and economy. The science, cleanup data, neighboring jurisdictions, residents, and businesses all point in the same direction: it is time to act.

Thank you for your leadership and commitment to protecting Lake Tahoe.

Sincerely,



Gavin Feiger, Policy Director

Attachment – business sign on letter

Sign-On – Business Support for a Plastics Reduction Ordinance in Tahoe-Placer

Dear Chair Landon and Members of the Placer County Board of Supervisors,

As a business operating in the Tahoe portion of Placer County, we support the County's proposed plastics reduction ordinance most recently discussed on February 3, 2026.

Lake Tahoe is central to our local economy and our quality of life. Plastic litter – particularly single-use bottles, polystyrene foodware, and unnecessary disposable items – harms Lake Tahoe's environment, visitor experience, and the local economy we depend on. Many of us have already transitioned to some practical alternatives, and we see growing customer support for reducing plastic waste even more.

We appreciate Placer County's Tahoe-specific, regionally aligned approach and believe a consistent standard will help protect Lake Tahoe while creating clarity and fairness for businesses.

A clear and consistent standard in the Tahoe portion of eastern Placer County will:

- Help reduce litter and protect Lake Tahoe's water quality and scenic beauty
- Create a level playing field for businesses
- Align eastern Placer County with regional stewardship efforts already in place
- Reflect the values of residents, visitors, and the business community

We support continuing work to refine and implement an ordinance that protects the environment while allowing for thoughtful implementation and reasonable business flexibility.

Thank you for your leadership and for engaging the business community as this ordinance moves forward.

Sincerely,

Tahoe-based Businesses of eastern Placer County

Business Name	Contact Name	Business Location (City or Area)
Lumber Mexican food truck	Karina	Kings beach
Homewood Mtn Resort	Andy Buckley	Homewood
Tahoe Daves Ski's & Boards	John Lincoln	Olympic valley, Kings Beach, Tahoe City and Truckee
Land to Living, Inc.	Robb Olson	Tahoe City
The Perfunctory LLC	Robb Olson	Tahoe Vista
The Ritz-Carlton, Lake Tahoe	Josh Johnson	Eastern Placer County
Granlibakken Tahoe	DJ Ewan	Tahoe City
Palisades Tahoe Resort	Mike Martin	Olympic Valley
Olympic Village Inn	Ginger Karl	Olympic Valley

Tahoe Art Haus & Cinema	Melissa Siig	Tahoe City
Sunnyside Resort	Mike Dumke	Tahoe City, West Shore
Granite Peak Management	Rachel Lyons	Alpine Meadows
Tahoe Tap Haus	Christopher Taylor	Tahoe City
Press+Pour	Christoph Taylor	Tahoe City
Alpenglow Sports	Stefanie Pyatt	Tahoe City
La Mexicana	Raul Rodriguez	Kings Beach
Tahoe Central Market Habeger	Bob Habeger	Kings Beach
Dulce Gula	Karina	Kings beach
Pep's Place	Darin Pepin	Tahoe Vista
Auld Dubliner	Amanda Dabel	Olympic Valley
Tremigo tahoe	Jennifer	Palisades
Sierra surf club	Brooklyn negrete	Tahoe city
New moon natural foods	Tammy graham	Tahoe city
Uncommon kitchen	Doug Baehr	Tahoe city
Savoie	Alison sullivan	Tahoe city
Tahoe National Brewing Co	Jessie	Tahoe City, Ca
REFLECTION INN	John Radebold	Kings Beach
Delish catering	Lee kresy	Kings beach
The Grid Bar & Grill	Brooke Burney	Kings Beach
Char-Pit Inc.	Robert Starbard	Kings Beach
Bear Belly Brewing	Adam Latham	Kings Beach
Jason's beachside grille	Monte webb	Kings beach
The Paper Trail	Judy Friedman	Tahoe City
Sylva New American Bistro	Andrew Shimer	Tahoe City
La katrina	Karina	Kings beach
Tahoe Waterman's Landing	Anik Wild	Carnelian Bay
evo	Julian Richardson	Tahoe City
Poppy's fro yo and ice cream	Lauren corda	Tahoe city
Tahoe Wine Collective	Allison Yonto	Tahoe City
zas lakefront	jeff jack	tahoe city