

## TAHOE REGIONAL PLANNING AGENCY

128 Market Street  
Stateline, Nevada  
[www.trpa.org](http://www.trpa.org)

P.O. Box 5310  
Stateline, NV 89449-5310

(775) 588-4547  
Fax (775) 588-4527  
Email: [trpa@trpa.org](mailto:trpa@trpa.org)

# NEWS RELEASE

Contact Julie Regan, Communications Chief, 775-589-5237

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## TRPA LEADS EFFORT TO COORDINATE FOREST HEALTH REGULATIONS AT LAKE TAHOE

**Lake Tahoe-CA/NV** – In an effort to improve public understanding of the regulations relating to tree removal and forest health, the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) has pledged to help coordinate the multiple agencies involved in vegetation management at Lake Tahoe, Agency officials said today, while also creating a streamlined permitting process to help property owners rebuild after the fire.

“We recognize that there is a disconnect somewhere between our rules and the realities on the ground,” said Julie Regan, Communications Chief for TRPA. “We are currently working with partner agencies to determine how to speed up defensible space work in the Tahoe Basin and improve public education around tree removal regulations.”

While the Agency’s first priority is to support the firefighters’ efforts to put out the blaze, Regan said, TRPA is also coordinating with restoration experts to help mitigate environmental impacts from the wildfire. The USFS will be the lead agency on the restoration work and TRPA will be collaborating with their experts along with other Tahoe agency scientists and experts, Regan said.

To help fire victims move on with their lives, TRPA is establishing a streamlined permitting process for all property owners. “Our rules already allow rebuilding to similar size and height, but we are being more comprehensive to ease the burden in a time of emergency,” Regan said. “TRPA is waiving the environmental mitigation fees that are usually required and are working on solutions to filing fees as well. We are also finding ways to help gather documentation on the properties and to minimize the steps for approval.”

The TRPA is working closely with Lake Tahoe agencies to do everything currently possible to help the community during the Angora fire disaster. Current rules allow for property owners to pursue the replacement of previously existing development for up to 18 months from the fire. TRPA will be discussing possible extensions to this timeline if needed. The Agency is also working to organize community workshops as soon as possible to answer questions and discuss resources and plans for the rebuilding process.

“Any changes made to vegetation and forest health procedures going forward must be based on science along with the input of the community,” said John Singlaub, Executive Director. “TRPA hopes the community will move into a healing phase after the fire is contained, and again, our hearts go out to our friends and neighbors who have lost so much.”

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency is a bi-state environmental planning and regulatory agency at Lake Tahoe. Our mission is to cooperatively lead the effort to preserve, restore, and enhance the unique natural and human environment of the Lake Tahoe Region now and in the future. The Agency regulates development at Lake Tahoe and spearheads an environmental restoration program for the Tahoe Basin. For more information, contact Julie Regan at (775) 589-5237 or Jeff Cowen at (775) 589-5278.

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