

February 10, 2026

The Honorable John Barrasso
U.S. Senate, Wyoming
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Catherine Cortez Masto
U.S. Senate, Nevada
309 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Subcommittee Chairman Barrasso and Ranking Member Cortez Masto:

The purpose of this letter is to express Team Tahoe's, the more than 80 public and private partners implementing the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, support for the Santini-Burton Modernization Act of 2026 (S. 3695). At its core, this legislation will unlock existing funding to protect Tahoe's famed crystal-clear waters and provide world-class recreation on public lands.

The original law was foundational to Lake Tahoe's early conservation success story. Under the Santini-Burton Act (P.L. 96-586), the USDA Forest Service has acquired more than 16,000 acres of land in the Tahoe Basin. Today, 90 percent of the Tahoe Region is publicly owned. These lands protect Tahoe's famed clarity and offer world-class recreation opportunities on public lands.

Changes to the Santini-Burton Act in the 2000s inadvertently limited the law's scope so funds could only be used to acquire land, but not to manage those lands. Modernization would allow Tahoe partners to manage public lands, reduce wildfire risk, and address visitor impacts, all of which were threats outlined in the original law.

Unlocking existing funding for ongoing land management, would allow the Tahoe Basin to complete more lake-saving Environmental Improvement Program projects. Projects that protect Tahoe's famed clarity, improve recreation access, manage forests, and reduce wildfire risk. The modernized bill enables the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California to take a meaningful step toward advancing traditional knowledge for forest health management and restoring Tribal stewardship in their ancestral and current homeland.

The Santini-Burton Modernization Act is the product of a multi-year collaboration by Tahoe's state and local governments, the bi-state Tahoe Regional Planning Agency, the Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California, non-profits, and the private sector.

Lake Tahoe benefits from the successful collaboration of the federal, state, regional, and local governments, Washoe Tribe, non-profits, and the private sector. The Santini-Burton Modernization Act is the critical investment in Tahoe that is needed to protect the Jewel of the Sierra for future generations.

Sincerely,

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency
League to Save Lake Tahoe
Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California
Supervisor Brooke Laine, El Dorado County, CA
Commissioner Alexis Hill, Washoe County, NV
Washoe County, Nevada
Placer County, California
Nevada Department of Conservation and
Natural Resources

Nevada Division of State Lands
Tahoe Chamber
Tahoe Fund
Tahoe Prosperity Center
North Tahoe Community Alliance
Tahoe Resource Conservation District
Travel North Tahoe Nevada
Tahoe Transportation District
South Tahoe Public Utility District

