

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING  
OF THE  
ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON GROWTH AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

**Eighty-First Session  
April 29, 2021**

The Committee on Growth and Infrastructure was called to order by Vice Chair Howard Watts at 1:34 p.m. on Thursday, April 29, 2021, Online and in Room 3143 of the Legislative Building, 401 South Carson Street, Carson City, Nevada. Copies of the minutes, including the Agenda ([Exhibit A](#)), the Attendance Roster ([Exhibit B](#)), and other substantive exhibits, are available and on file in the Research Library of the Legislative Counsel Bureau and on the Nevada Legislature's website at [www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021](http://www.leg.state.nv.us/App/NELIS/REL/81st2021).

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Chair  
Assemblyman Howard Watts, Vice Chair  
Assemblywoman Tracy Brown-May  
Assemblyman John Ellison  
Assemblyman Glen Leavitt  
Assemblyman C.H. Miller  
Assemblywoman Sarah Peters  
Assemblyman Tom Roberts  
Assemblywoman Shondra Summers-Armstrong  
Assemblyman Jim Wheeler  
Assemblyman Steve Yeager

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

None

**GUEST LEGISLATORS PRESENT:**

Senator Dallas Harris, Senate District No. 11

**STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Katie Siemon, Committee Policy Analyst  
Jessica Dummer, Committee Counsel  
Devon Kajatt, Committee Manager  
Joan Waldock, Committee Secretary  
Cheryl Williams, Committee Assistant



**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Debrea Terwilliger, Senior Staff Counsel, Regulatory Operations, Public Utilities Commission of Nevada  
Jim Hoffman, representing Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice; Clark County Public Defender's Office; and Washoe County Public Defender's Office  
James R. Lawrence, Deputy Director, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources  
Emily Walsh, representing League to Save Lake Tahoe  
Julie Regan, Chief, External Affairs, and Deputy Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency

**Vice Chair Watts:**

[Roll was called. Committee rules and protocol were explained.] The Chair is presenting a bill in another committee. A quorum is present. Today, we will hear two bills. After that, we will have a work session. I will open the hearing on Senate Bill 387 (1st Reprint).

**Senate Bill 387 (1st Reprint): Provides for the regulation of certain suppliers that provide an inmate calling service. (BDR 58-1015)**

**Senator Dallas Harris, Senate District No. 11:**

Senate Bill 387 (1st Reprint) deals with the regulation of intrastate calling services for inmates. Before going over the specifics of Senate Bill 387 (1st Reprint), I would like to explain why this bill is necessary. For many years throughout the United States, inmate calling services, both interstate and intrastate, were unregulated. In 2007, the Nevada Legislature eliminated the authority of the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada (PUCN) to oversee the companies that provided inmate calling services. Over the years, the number of companies providing inmate calling services has decreased due to telecommunication mergers. Not surprisingly, this lack of oversight and lack of competition resulted in phone rates for inmate calls that were unconscionably high, and the issue gained national attention. In response to this problem, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) stepped in to regulate and limit the cost of interstate calls. Currently, the FCC caps are 21 cents per minute for prepaid calls and 25 cents per minute for collect calls. The FCC is working to further lower those numbers. However, the FCC lacks jurisdiction to regulate intrastate calls, which account for 80 percent of the calls made from prisons or jails. In 2018, the average cost for a 15-minute phone call from a local jail, which is usually an intrastate call, was \$5.74 as compared to the average cost of a 15-minute long-distance landline call of \$1.50 or less. Ancillary charges for opening an account and receiving or paying bills can add 40 percent to the cost of a call from prison or jail.

You may wonder why we care so much about how an inmate is charged for a phone call. The answer lies in the many studies that document the benefits and importance of inmates' maintaining family contact while incarcerated. Chief among those benefits is evidence of significantly reduced rates of recidivism. Equally compelling are the mental health benefits

for the inmate and the positive impact on children of inmates from maintaining a parent-child bond. Allowing inmates to stay in touch with their families also helps them, upon release, to find jobs, housing, and to maintain sobriety.

Despite the benefit of family contact, at least one survey found that nearly 70 percent of inmate respondents reported the cost of a phone call as a key obstacle to keeping in touch, and a third went into debt to make phone calls. As a result, the FCC has called on states to address the issue of excessive intrastate inmate phone charges. Last year, the National Association of Regulatory Utility Commissioners released a statement calling on its members to seek authority to review the rates in their states. At this point, it seems pretty clear that without oversight and regulation, this situation is not going to resolve itself. That is the motivation behind Senate Bill 387 (1st Reprint).

With that background in mind, let me walk you through the bill's provisions. This bill was amended in the Senate to fix some terminology related to ancillary charges, but the amendment was not substantive in any way. Section 2 defines "correctional facility" to include Department of Corrections facilities, be they public or private prisons, as well as all city and county jails or detention centers. Section 3 defines "inmate calling service" as limited to intrastate phone calls from a correctional facility. Section 4 says an inmate calling service must file an application with the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada for approval of its rates and ancillary charges.

The crux of the bill is section 5, which directs the Commission to adopt regulations establishing rate caps, limiting ancillary charges, and creating a procedure for allowing deviations from those caps or limits. Section 5 also makes clear that the rate caps set by the Commission cannot exceed the caps set by the FCC for interstate inmate calls and that the limits on ancillary charges must be consistent with the FCC's interstate limits. Finally, section 5 mandates an annual review of the established caps and limits and directs the Commission to revise them as needed.

Sections 6 through 10 are conforming provisions. Section 11 requires a calling service to publish its rates, terms, and conditions on the company's website and in the first billing to a customer. Section 12 requires existing calling services to file for approval of their rates and charges no later than 30 days after the effective date of the regulations adopted by the Commission. Section 13 exempts the bill from having a fiscal note before a committee takes action and is no longer relevant. Because this bill only enables the Commission to adopt regulations, any fiscal impact on the Department of Corrections, local jails, or detention centers will likely be addressed during the rulemaking process.

I would like to note for the Committee, I have Debrea Terwilliger from the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada on the line. She has been fantastic in assisting me in drafting this legislation. I do not know if she wants to make comments, but she is available for questions.

**Debrea Terwilliger, Senior Staff Counsel, Regulatory Operations, Public Utilities Commission of Nevada:**

Senator Harris covered why the bill is important and what the intent of the bill will accomplish, so I do not need to go into that. I am available for questions, particularly any questions pertaining to how the PUCN process would work upon passage.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Does that conclude the presentation?

**Senator Harris:**

It does.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Are there questions from members?

**Assemblyman Wheeler:**

I see what you are trying to do with this bill, but I wonder if there is any chance the providers will find it not financially viable and stop providing those services to the inmates.

**Senator Harris:**

I think that is a process that can be dealt with at the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada. They are well versed in allowing companies to come in, put forward an application, and say what the cost to provide the service is and why they need to charge the rate they charge. The PUCN's job is to decide if those charges are just and reasonable. Any company can come in and make an argument that they need to charge the rate they charge. We do know that the FCC, as I mentioned, has already put a cap on interstate calls. A lot of these companies are already operating under that limit. I will also note that the cost of delivering a voice minute in 2021 is almost negligible. The infrastructure is already in place. Nowadays, we are charged for data; they do not even count our minutes anymore on cellular service, much less landline-type services. I do not believe this would be a situation where if they could not charge 51 cents a minute, the model would not work.

**Assemblyman Wheeler:**

Do you know why they charge so much now for an inmate call versus a regular call with their extra expenses?

**Debrea Terwilliger:**

In opening remarks, Senator Harris commented there was a push in the early 2000s to deregulate telephone service. That happened in Nevada with Assembly Bill 518 of the 74th Session. As part of that process, things like inmate calling were deregulated. Once it was deregulated, as Senator Harris noted, there was consolidation in the market. The competition decreased; therefore, it opened an opportunity for rates to go higher. The FCC has explored this issue at length to see if there is any justification for why an inmate's call might be more expensive than a regular call. The comments to the FCC did not indicate there was any justification for that. Right now, the FCC has proposed, in a rulemaking they

have not yet adopted, a slight 2-cent or 3-cent per minute difference for calls between jails and prisons just because they thought there might be a difference in the cost of providing services in a smaller jail versus a prison. Based on my review of the record at the FCC, I do not think there is any support for the idea that an inmate's call is more expensive than a regular telephone call.

I want to provide a note to your earlier question that the provisions of this bill also provide what I would call a "relief valve." If an inmate calling service provider comes to the PUCN saying it will cost them more to provide service than the rate cap that is in place, it allows them to make that justification to make their case. The PUCN will set rate caps via a rulemaking process. It allows the inmate calling service provider to say the rates will not be just and reasonable and will not permit the company to recover its costs. There is a process in place in case it is too expensive for one particular inmate calling service provider in Lincoln County, Pershing County, or wherever, if they would come to us and say it is more expensive than the rate cap. They are allowed to make that case, and we will take that up, like a quasi-rate case, to explore why it costs them more to serve that jail, for example.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Thank you. While with the consolidation there may be some options for the Department of Corrections to consider, the inmates themselves only have one option. While general phone customers have choices and competition can keep prices lower, that is not necessarily the case for inmates.

**Senator Harris:**

This is the one time you hear me give the Department of Corrections a shout-out. They already are providing these services at about 11 cents a minute; they are well below the FCC cap. We see local jails charging the high, exorbitant prices. I think that is due to the fact that the Department of Corrections is contracted with CenturyLink. CenturyLink operates across the country, so they are already keeping their rates as low as we would like to see.

**Assemblyman Yeager:**

Both of my questions relate to section 2 of the bill, the definition of correctional facility. Does this apply to juvenile facilities or places where juveniles would be housed, or will it only apply to our adult facilities?

**Senator Harris:**

It is my intention it should apply to juvenile facilities. If I need to make that clearer, I am willing to do so.

**Assemblyman Yeager:**

I am not sure if you need to. I just noticed that it talks about the Department of Corrections, so I had some concern that the definition might not be broad enough to cover some of our juvenile facilities. We can get some guidance from the Legal Division of the Legislative Counsel Bureau on that. The same section mentions the Department of Corrections may have contracted with private entities. I think there still are some of those contracts in place

although I think they are being phased out. We have scenarios where sometimes our Nevada inmates are transferred out of state for safety or other reasons. Will this apply only to facilities located in the state of Nevada? I assume it would because the PUCN regulates the state of Nevada, but I wanted to get that intent on the record.

**Senator Harris:**

Yes, it would only apply to facilities within the state. There are some jurisdictional issues we have to consider. As you mentioned, the Public Utilities Commission of Nevada can only regulate operators as they are here, and we are only talking about calls within the state of Nevada.

**Assemblyman Roberts:**

The FCC regulates state-to-state calls. Intrastate calls are currently unregulated. This bill would provide oversight and regulation on that. What drives the rates now? Is that purely up to the discretion of the jail or whoever signs the contracts? Is that how it is determined now?

**Senator Harris:**

Yes. I would say traditional market forces how many actors there are, which is why we have discussed the fact there has been quite a bit of consolidation, and the contract between the jail and the provider determines rates.

**Assemblyman Roberts:**

Do you know of facilities in the state that get money back from these calls? I am not aware of any. In your research, did you come across any?

**Senator Harris:**

I will try to tread carefully here. I have not read any of these contracts personally, but it is my understanding that there may be some financial benefit in the exchange for these phone call rates inside of the setups, how they operate together.

**Assemblyman Roberts:**

Thank you.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Are there any other questions?

**Assemblyman Miller:**

Thank you, Senator Harris, for bringing this important bill. I have had close family members who have made repeated calls to stay in contact with my grandmother, my mother, and my aunt. They had really high bills. I am curious to know if the cost still falls on the person receiving the call.

**Senator Harris:**

I am not sure that it always does. When you make a collect call, the cost falls to the receiver. I could be wrong, so I will double-check this and circle back. It is my understanding that you could also have some money on your books to pay for the call you are making. That way, you do not have to make a collect call.

**Assemblyman Miller:**

Could I be a cosponsor on this bill?

**Senator Harris:**

It would be my pleasure to have you.

**Assemblywoman Summers-Armstrong:**

This bill is thoughtful and timely. Do you know how much money was spent on calls in either 2019 or 2020?

**Senator Harris:**

I do not have that number, but I would be happy to dig into it for you. I am pretty sure we could find the statistics. I can tell you that, according to the Prison Policy Initiative, the highest cost of a 15-minute call from a local jail in Nevada was \$14.25, which is almost \$1 per minute. These charges can rack up quickly.

**Assemblywoman Summers-Armstrong:**

I would like to be added as a cosponsor on this bill. I appreciate all that you have done this session to be sensitive to issues of justice. I am proud to participate.

**Senator Harris:**

Thank you.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Are there any additional questions? [There were none.] This is a timely measure, especially with resuming visitation within the Department of Corrections starting up on May 1, 2021, after a 14-month hiatus. Contact with friends, family members, and loved ones as part of the rehabilitation process is important. There is a need to have a range of options available for people, in-person visitation, and options for remote contact. I appreciate your bringing this measure forward. We can move on to testimony in support for S.B. 387 (R1).

**Jim Hoffman, representing Nevada Attorneys for Criminal Justice; Clark County Public Defender's Office; and Washoe County Public Defender's Office:**

We support S.B. 387 (R1). For incarcerated people, phone calls are a lifeline to the world. With COVID-19, it is impossible for incarcerated parents to see their children or for spouses to see each other. Even without COVID-19, many people are incarcerated far away from their homes. If a person is in prison in Ely, his wife and children cannot easily drive up from Las Vegas to visit him. Phone calls are the only way that many families can remain in

contact. As Senator Harris said, family contact is an important part of rehabilitation and an important, positive good for the families of incarcerated people. The extortionate rates for phone calls hurt imprisoned people and their families.

Here is a specific, real-life example: A 15-minute interstate jail call from the Henderson Detention Center costs \$3.15. As Senator Harris said, a regular phone call costs nearly nothing on top of our existing data bills. A 15-minute in-state jail call from the Henderson Detention Center costs \$7.42, slightly less than 50 cents a minute. Prisoners can make as little as 50 cents an hour. Put yourselves in their shoes. You need to work for an hour to talk to your children for one minute. There is no infrastructure-based reason it should cost that much. They are charging more because incarcerated people have no alternative if they want to talk to their families. This is literally a captive market for them. We do not believe this is a fair or just policy. We believe S.B. 387 (R1) does a good job of resolving it.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Thank you for your testimony, Mr. Hoffman. We will go on to the next caller in support. [There was no one.] Is there testimony in opposition to S.B. 387 (R1)? [There was none.] Is there testimony in neutral? [There was none.] Are there any closing comments?

**Senator Harris:**

I want everybody to close your eyes and go back in time to when you had to pick your "fab five" numbers where your minutes would be free, or when your calls were free if you made them after 7 p.m. That was the main driver of your cell phone bill and your cost; that was the win. Nowadays, nobody cares. You can call long-distance; you can call intrastate. The cost is really about data these days, and there is reason for that. It is because technology has made its way down a path where it is cheap to deliver a voice minute. There is no reason for us to allow these barriers to continue to be in place for folks who are in jail to communicate with their families, especially when we know that is one of the best ways to ensure that they do not return.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Thank you. I will close the hearing on Senate Bill 387 (1st Reprint) and will open the hearing on Senate Concurrent Resolution 8.

**Senate Concurrent Resolution 8:** Expresses support for the identification of key transportation priorities for the Lake Tahoe Basin. (BDR R-365)

**Assemblywoman Sarah Peters, Assembly District No. 24:**

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 is the result of the work accomplished by the Legislative Committee for the Review and Oversight of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency and the Marlette Lake Water System during the most recent interim. Assemblyman Wheeler participated. It is a fantastic interim committee if you have the opportunity to serve on it. It brings you to northern Nevada quite frequently, but you get to spend most of your days around Lake Tahoe. The committee receives input from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and the Tahoe Transportation District. You may be aware of the safety and



economic problems associated with congestion along the roadways, concerns about greenhouse gas emissions related to that congestion, other stormwater runoff pollution decreasing the lake's clarity, and infrastructure that is due for replacement. If you have been up there to visit, you know it is not an easy task to get from one point to another along the highway, and there is limited public transportation.

Simply building more roadways in the area surrounding Lake Tahoe is not an economically or environmentally feasible solution to address the problem of traffic congestion. With an estimated 25 percent increase in visitation expected by 2035, transportation around the Lake Tahoe area will become an increasingly important issue to address and a more difficult problem to solve the longer we wait. Having lived all my life in this region, I can tell you the issue exists; this is not a pending problem.

Senate Concurrent Resolution 8 requests that Lake Tahoe's existing Bi-State Working Group on Transportation work collaboratively to develop a list of transportation priorities and projects for the Lake Tahoe Basin to be accomplished over the next five years or more. This list, which will be presented at the committee's first meeting during the 2021-2022 legislative interim is requested to:

- Include an assessment of the costs and benefits of each project in protecting and enhancing the ecosystem of the Lake Tahoe Basin.
- Coincide with both Nevada's and California's goals, benchmarks, and targets for addressing climate change.
- Identify potential funding recommendations and any equity barriers resulting from those recommendations; and
- Identify any other barriers, monetary and nonmonetary, to implementing an effective transportation system in the Lake Tahoe Basin.

During the interim, the committee heard from stakeholders who had gone through a process of assessing the best option for addressing transportation issues in the basin. They came up with one option that became unfeasible because of the pandemic and budgetary issues related to where we are today. We are asking them to reconsider, to not necessarily not pursue that option, but to put it on the back burner until we are in a better position to address it. Instead, we asked them to look at smaller projects, things that will take us bite by bite to a place where we can get to addressing some of these problems. Members on this Committee know that transportation is not a singular and unified issue; it is a task that is taken on by each individual, by each community, by each group of individuals attempting to do the same thing—get to work, get to school, get to play. This request directs these partners in pursuing those kinds of options. In a basin such as Lake Tahoe, which is so dynamic and where we have some of the highest-earning population and some of the lowest-earning population

living within streets of each other, we know that a broad-based solution is not a solid solution. Jim Lawrence is here to help answer questions. He has been working with the TRPA groups around the transportation issue for some time.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Mr. Lawrence, is there anything you would like to add before we open it up to questions?

**James R. Lawrence, Deputy Director, State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources:**

I appreciate the opportunity to testify in support. I want to thank the interim committee for their attention to Lake Tahoe and the issues and challenges that the basin faces. I also want to thank Assemblywoman Peters for her time and work dedicated to Lake Tahoe issues in the interim and for supporting this legislation.

Up at Lake Tahoe, we have a tourist-based economy that is estimated at \$5 billion. We have two states, five counties, and a large federal land manager. There is a large and beautiful lake right in the middle of everything. Balancing sustainable recreation and the economy with the environment is becoming urgent. My boss, Bradley Crowell, Director of the State Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, has been working with his counterpart, Wade Crowfoot, California's Secretary of Natural Resources. Transportation is not necessarily in the wheelhouse of natural resources departments; they recognize they need to balance the economy with the environmental impacts that can occur with unmanaged transportation. It is very important to our two states' resource departments. We have been working with stakeholders. We have made significant progress, but we need to act soon. We need to identify those priority projects, and we need to get consensus among all the stakeholders because collaboration is what really makes things happen up at Lake Tahoe. This resolution sends a message that time is of the essence, but we need to have agreement among the parties, stakeholders, and vested interests to really make a difference. With that, I would be happy to answer any questions.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

We will open the meeting to questions from members.

**Assemblyman Leavitt:**

I can see the need to urge stakeholders to come up with a viable solution and take more immediate action through legislation. How long does this last? Is this a one-shot deal in which we urge them to come up with a five- or ten-year plan, then we move on? Or is this an ongoing thing? How does this work?

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

I will defer to Mr. Lawrence for some of the response, but I will point out this group has been working toward a solution for the transportation issue, particularly the congestion in the basin, for quite a while. We have taken small chunks. We have enhanced roadways, parking, and access in certain areas and invested in projects that have helped in small ways in certain areas. We are asking them to continue to do that. The benefit of asking them to

continue to develop options now and in the next five years is we have potential infrastructure funding dollars as part of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 and the federal government's investment in recovering from the pandemic. If we can get these projects shovel-ready, we can put some of those dollars toward them. That has been a huge hurdle for some of the smaller projects in regions that are very specific. I hope we can overcome some of that by encouraging that we just get moving on it, not putting it aside because the cost-benefit analysis does not quite get there when we are talking about state or local-dollar investments. These federal dollars are going to be a huge boost for that.

**Jim Lawrence:**

Speaking directly to your question about how long is the expectation, I do a lot of work at Lake Tahoe, so I know the way it works up there. People will get together and collaborate for as long as there is value and there is progress. At this point in time at Lake Tahoe, there is a tremendous amount of passion and investment that people are putting in their personal time to start trying to solve some of these issues up there. I see this group moving forward for as long as they are going to be effective. Ideally, it is a group that does not need to get together in the planning phases, and we get into implementation. Yesterday [April 28, 2021] at the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency Governing Board meeting, the TRPA unanimously adopted the next regional transportation plan for the basin. It is also being heard at the Tahoe Transportation District. Among the major planning entities up in the basin, there is a consensus on a vision. It is really the details and the implementation schedule. I think the group will get together for as long as they feel like they are effective. I have no expectation that people will get together if it is just time wasted.

To date, the bi-state group has achieved a lot of accomplishments. We have gotten some work started on the priorities. We have had some pilot projects roll out that will allow us to have some memorandums of understanding in place or maybe regional transportation connecting the neighboring regions with the Lake Tahoe Basin. There has been a tremendous amount of momentum, but as far as putting this group together and this project's priorities, I think that could probably be done quickly, but it is really the implementation. The group might have to stay together to make sure that the implementation is coordinated. I hope that answered your question.

**Assemblyman Leavitt:**

Thank you for your thorough answer. Is there a mechanism in place to help groups prioritize and implement projects?

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

The purpose of the resolution is to do that and to express our support for that effort. We are not expressly saying that we would continue to be partners in pursuing legislation if necessary and being partners in pursuing funding at different levels if necessary. This encourages that relationship that we are here in support of this effort and, as they need us, we continue to be a partner but maybe as a silent partner in the corner who shows up every interim to talk about it.

**Assemblywoman Summers-Armstrong:**

You talked about shovel-ready projects and hoping to have something together by the time the American Rescue Plan Act funds come down. Do you have an idea of where you want to begin? Do you have the report written? Do you have a particular area for starting? Is it connected, or are you choosing one place? It looks as if there are several organizations together. Have you identified where you will start if you get a specific amount of money, hoping it will influence other projects?

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

The interim committee meets with the stakeholders through a small period of time—once a month or once every couple of months for a couple of hours. As partners, the legislative interim committee is not involved in the nitty-gritty with them on the planning, discussion, and reporting. Mr. Lawrence attends those meetings regularly. I will ask him to go into the details of how the planning process has been going and where the partners are in their hopes for implementing those projects.

**Jim Lawrence:**

There is general agreement on a vision for the top-priority projects. Lake Tahoe has a unique transportation challenge. It is a popular tourist destination, but it is also home to many workers and people who commute either between the valley and Lake Tahoe or vice versa. Looking at the transportation system, the main challenge is on the peak recreation days and is becoming worse. During peak ski season or during the summer at the beaches, the system becomes overwhelmed. Many of the priorities we have been talking about address that most urgent problem.

We have looked at the basin and sectors. On the northern Nevada side of the lake, we looked at State Route 28, what is called the Highway 28 corridor, which is where the popular beaches are in Sand Harbor. For the south shore and the city of South Lake Tahoe, we have challenges, and we need to reinvest in the communities in the south shore's revitalization project to get some microtransit set up. On the California side, Emerald Bay has the same problems and challenges as the beaches on the east shore. How do we manage the visitor experience for a sustainable recreation system? People could get out of their cars and maybe take shuttles. The northwestern quadrant around Tahoe City on the California side gets a lot of summer visitors but is also where a lot of the ski areas are located. The real challenge there is the winter visitors. Placer County is home to a lot of the ski areas and is looking at trying to get additional bus lanes, giving priority to buses to get people back and forth to the ski areas. There is a vision of how do we take the worst of the problem and try to make it better, but we need to work on the details. We need to get specific on the phasing.

Your question was about if there was a pot of money, which project would it go to first. I think that is the next step that this concurrent resolution addresses. It takes those larger priorities and gets more specific so we can get to that point. A large part of it is to get to the point where we can get free transit to everybody up there. We know people will take public transit if it is free and frequent. That is another one of the goals.

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

We have a variety of community advocates who are participating in conversations. Our working families up there have different complaints about transportation and access than our vacation families do. They are strong partners at the table talking about things like microtransit and accessibility of resorts to the working family homes, even related to the access to homes up there, which is worse than in some of our other regions. Gentrification is taking place, and people are getting pushed out of their communities. How do we keep those working families connected to the jobs that we need them for to meet the tourism goals? We must find the balance in those communities of how to regulate and ensure all folks are taken care of. Just the other day I heard about a new gondola service going in as an option for transportation, mostly for the tourism base. It would get people off the roads. That is a different project we have seen come through.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Yesterday we heard another resolution [Senate Joint Resolution 12] in the Assembly Committee on Natural Resources calling for the continuation and expansion of the Tahoe East Shore Trail project, which is a multimodal trail with parking nodes that can help relieve some of the congestion on the Nevada side of the lake.

**Assemblyman Wheeler:**

I am not sure what good this is going to do. For 20 years, I have been hearing about all these projects we are going to do up there, and everybody is going to get together. There were plans for a ferry across the lake, the loop road, light rail, now I am hearing for the first time about a gondola. When are we actually going to do something? When are we actually going to be able to get these people together and do something up there? It needs to be done. I have no problem with this resolution; I just want to see us take it to the next step. It is almost impossible to work with both California and the federal government to get any of this done. I wonder if the next resolution should just say that Nevada will do its side by ourselves.

**Assemblywoman Peters:**

The interim committee felt the same way coming out of this last interim. For these far-off projects, it takes too long to develop regulations, policies, and practices to get investments and to get stakeholders involved. That is probably the impetus of this resolution. We want to take a smaller bite and look at projects we could actually get done. We can set a timeline to get these to this coalition that is invested in these problems so they can prioritize them and get us a definitive date for their five top priorities to flesh out and ensure we are all on the same page.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Are there any additional questions? [There were none.] We will move on to testimony on S.C.R. 8. We will begin with testimony in support.

**Emily Walsh, representing League to Save Lake Tahoe:**

Increasing traffic in the Lake Tahoe Basin has negative impacts on the visitor experience and the quality of life of residents. Most importantly, the pollution from these cars impacts lake clarity and air quality. Lake Tahoe has been included in discussion on transportation improvements for a number of years. Our executive director has served on a bi-state working group. We support the continued efforts by the two states to craft real transportation solutions that will reduce vehicle miles traveled in the basin and protect the lake. Thank you. We urge your support.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

We will go on to the next caller wishing to offer support.

**Julie Regan, Chief, External Affairs, and Deputy Director, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency:**

I am speaking on behalf of TRPA in support of S.C.R. 8. We would like to thank Assemblywoman Peters for bringing this item before you, Senator Julia Ratti for her leadership, and all members of TRPA's legislative oversight committee that you have heard about today. We appreciate this discussion on transportation.

As you know, Tahoe is the backyard for northern Nevada's growing population. The COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated the importance of public recreational opportunities for the region. While many resort destinations were empty because of COVID-19 closures, our beaches, trails, and roadways were crowded with visitors seeking refuge in the great outdoors. Congested hotspots around the basin underscored the vital need for this improved infrastructure that we have discussed today. Acting in our capacity as the federally designated metropolitan planning organization, our board voted unanimously on the update of our regional transportation plan. This is a \$2.4 billion plan calling for investment in transportation projects to improve transit, trails, technology, and community corridors like Highway 28 around the entire basin. As was mentioned, this bi-state consultation will continue to work in the future, and we are actively engaged in the driving consensus around funding solutions to implement the plan. Thank you all for this important discussion that affects the quality of life of our residents, commuters, and visitors. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Thank you for your comments. Let us go on to the next caller. [There was no one.] Is there testimony in opposition? [There was none.] Is there testimony in the neutral position? [There was none.] Are there closing remarks? [There were none.]

[A letter in support of S.C.R. 8 was submitted by Amy R. Berry, Chief Executive Officer, Tahoe Fund, [Exhibit C](#).]

I will close the hearing on S.C.R. 8. We will start the work session on Senate Bill 17.

**Senate Bill 17: Revises provisions governing motor vehicles. (BDR 43-319)**

**Katie Siemon, Committee Policy Analyst:**

Senate Bill 17 revises provisions governing motor vehicles [[Exhibit D](#)]. It was first heard before this Committee on March 4, 2021. Senate Bill 17 revises provisions relating to driving schools by: (1) removing the requirement for a physical location for online schools; (2) requiring the production of records at the request of the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV); and (3) setting three years as the retention period for records. The measure also grants the DMV discretionary authority to renew instruction permits under certain circumstances. There have been no amendments to this measure, and there are no fiscal notes associated with this measure.

**Vice Chair Watts:**

Are there any questions about S.B. 17? [There were none.] We will take a brief recess [at 2:29 p.m.].

**Chair Monroe-Moreno:**

The meeting is called back to order [at 2:36 p.m.]. We have had discussion on S.B. 17. I will entertain a motion to do pass Senate Bill 17.

ASSEMBLYMAN WATTS MOVED TO DO PASS SENATE BILL 17.

ASSEMBLYMAN LEAVITT SECONDED THE MOTION.

THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.

I will assign the floor statement to Assemblywoman Brown-May. We will close the work session. The last item on our agenda is public comment. Do we have any public comment? [There was none.] I appreciate your patience with my schedule today. I will see you on Tuesday, May 4, 2021. This meeting is adjourned [at 2:38 p.m.].

RESPECTFULLY SUBMITTED:

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Joan Waldock  
Committee Secretary

APPROVED BY:

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Assemblywoman Daniele Monroe-Moreno, Chair

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **EXHIBITS**

[Exhibit A](#) is the Agenda.

[Exhibit B](#) is the Attendance Roster.

[Exhibit C](#) is a letter dated April 27, 2021, submitted by Amy R. Berry, Chief Executive Officer, Tahoe Fund, in support of Senate Concurrent Resolution 8.

[Exhibit D](#) is the Work Session Document for Senate Bill 17, presented by Katie Siemon, Committee Policy Analyst, Research Division, Legislative Counsel Bureau.