

North Lake Tahoe Public Utility Districts Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory

Recommended Action: Adopt Resolution 24-04-03 (Attachment 1) authorizing a grant of up to \$81,000 to the Tahoe City Public Utility District (TCPUD) to conduct the North Lake Tahoe Regional Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory (GHG Inventory).

Executive Summary: This recommended action supports the TCPUD and the North Tahoe Public Utility District (NTPUD) in conducting a GHG inventory. The GHG Inventory will include data on emissions from services provided by each public utility district within their service territories. This GHG Inventory provides the TCPUD and NTPUD a comprehensive view of operations emissions. The utility districts will use the data from this GHG Inventory to identify next steps to reduce GHG emissions and measure progress toward local, regional, state, and federal GHG emissions reduction goals. The recommended action advances the California Tahoe Conservancy's (Conservancy) Strategic Plan Goal 4 (Foster Basinwide Climate Change Adaptation and Sustainable Communities). Upon Board authorization, staff will execute all necessary agreements.

Location: The GHG Inventory covers the TCPUD and NTPUD service areas in the North Lake Tahoe region within the Lake Tahoe Basin (Basin) (Attachment 2): from state line at Crystal Bay to the west and south along the west shore to Emerald Bay.

Fiscal Summary: The Conservancy will award up to \$81,000 of General Fund appropriated for climate resilience.

Overview

History

Climate change threatens the Basin with warmer temperatures, less snowpack, earlier runoff, more extreme floods and droughts, shifts in lake level, and more severe wildfires and smoke. The State of California has called for accelerated climate action via the latest California Climate Adaptation Strategy and Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy. Governor Gavin Newsom's California Climate Commitment is to build out a 100 percent clean energy grid and achieve carbon neutrality by 2045.

The Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) and regional partners have long worked to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the Basin. In 2013, the Conservancy completed the

Regional Greenhouse Gas Inventory. This initial inventory identified the major sources of GHG emissions within the Basin and provided a starting point for setting reduction targets and identifying potential mitigation strategies that can be implemented to meet those reduction targets in the future. In 2014, the TRPA led a multiagency effort to create the Lake Tahoe Sustainable Communities Program, a region-wide sustainability initiative, with the goal of coordinating the sustainability initiatives already occurring in the Basin. This program set a GHG emission reduction goal of 15 percent from 2005 levels by 2020 and 49 percent by 2035. In 2021, the TRPA completed an updated GHG inventory, showing that the region met and exceeded the 2020 reduction goal, but that more work was needed to reach the 2035 target. Further investment is needed in regional actions to reduce GHG emissions to meet future climate goals. Although the 2021 GHG inventory provided a high-level assessment of GHG emissions for the Basin, the TCPUD and NTPUD need to understand the level of GHG emissions not just in their region, but from their specific operations. Therefore, this recommended action is a necessary investment to identify the districts' GHG emissions and next steps to meet the 2035 emissions target.

The 2022 Lake Tahoe Climate Resilience Action Strategy also addressed the impacts of climate change to the Basin. The Strategy identified five focus areas to advance equity, create jobs, and build resilience for the Basin's extraordinary natural resources, 57,000 residents, and an economy that supports 15 million annual visitors. Focus area four identified the need for upgraded infrastructure and protection for vulnerable communities, which will be directly furthered by the recommended action.

This GHG Inventory will guide the TCPUD and NTPUD in reducing their GHG emissions throughout their service areas, to achieve these state and regional goals and strategy.

Detailed Description of Recommended Action

1. Major Elements and/or Steps of the Recommended Action

The Conservancy will provide a grant to the TCPUD to oversee a contract to conduct the GHG Inventory. The TCPUD and NTPUD have similar operational profiles for each of their service areas, including water supply, distribution, and storage; wastewater collection and transport; and parks and recreation programs and facilities. This GHG Inventory will calculate, quantify, and assess emission sources from each agency's operational profiles across their respective service areas within the Basin.

The contractor will compile the GHG Inventory data to develop both baseline (historical) and current year inventories across the north and west shore of Lake Tahoe.

Establishing a baseline inventory is an important step to create a reference point to which current emissions can be compared. The GHG Inventory will make a comparison between the baseline and the current year to demonstrate trends in sector impacts and advances or regressions.

The GHG Inventory also includes multiple forecasts and a gap analysis against state target goals. One forecast evaluates emission inventories by demographic projections and provides a summary of the projected emissions by sector (water, sewer, parks, and recreation) in five-year increments out to 2045. The second forecast accounts for federal and state actions to reduce future GHG emissions and will apply to the utility districts' emissions for them to consider for future possible targets and GHG reduction strategies. The contractors will also provide a report that condenses the data and recommendations into a regional outlook. The TCPUD and NTPUD have compiled a list of actions to reduce GHG emissions. However, those actions alone will not achieve net zero by 2045. This GHG Inventory will identify the next steps they can take to achieve this goal.

2. Overall Context and Benefits

This action will forward goals set in the Conservancy's strategic plan, and help the Basin achieve state and regional targets.

This GHG Inventory gives the TCPUD and NTPUD a comprehensive view of operations emissions. The utility districts will use the data from this GHG Inventory to identify next steps to reduce GHG emissions and measure progress toward local, regional, state, and federal GHG emissions reduction goals. The TCPUD and NTPUD are already taking action to reduce their GHG emissions (e.g., using renewable fuels, enforcing and monitoring idling restrictions, purchasing new electric fleet vehicles) and this work will help inform future strategies and priorities.

3. Schedule for the Recommended Action

The TCPUD will begin collecting data upon execution of the grant agreement and aims to complete the GHG Inventory by summer 2025.

Task	Completion Date
Anticipated grant execution	Spring 2024
Task 1 – Project Management	Spring 2025
Task 2 – Data Collection	Spring 2025
Task 3 – Contractual Analysis and Reporting	Spring 2025
Final Invoice	Summer 2025

Financing

Upon approval, the Conservancy will award up to \$81,000 of General Fund appropriated for climate resilience. The TCPUD and NTPUD will provide an additional \$20,000 each, for a total project cost of \$101,000.

Budget Table

Project Task	Conservancy Grant Amount	Grantee Match (Combined)	Total Budget
Task 1 – Project Management	\$10,256	\$5,000	\$15,256

Task 2 – Data Collection	\$8,150	\$15,000	\$23,150
Task 3 – Contractual Analysis and Reporting	\$62,594		\$62,594
Total Budget	\$81,000	\$20,000	\$101,000

Authority

Consistency with the Conservancy’s Enabling Legislation

The recommended action is consistent with the Conservancy’s enabling legislation. Specifically, Government Code section 66907.7 authorizes the Conservancy to award grants to public agencies for purposes consistent with the Conservancy’s mission.

Consistency with the Conservancy’s Strategic Plan

The recommended action is consistent with Strategic Plan Goal 4, Strategy D, by coordinating with partners to create a GHG Inventory to guide emission reduction efforts in the Basin.

Consistency with the Conservancy’s Program Guidelines

There are no Conservancy program guidelines for GHG inventory. However, the action meets many of the Conservancy’s funding considerations, including accounting for climate change, generating multiple benefits, and having broad community and partner support.

Consistency with External Authorities

The recommended action is consistent with the environmental goals of the Lake Tahoe Environmental Improvement Program, the Tahoe Climate Resilience Action Strategy, the Lake Tahoe Sustainable Communities Program, and the California Climate Adaptation Strategy.

Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act

Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines (Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 15000 et seq.), certain classes of activities are statutorily exempt from CEQA or are exempt because they have been determined by the Secretary of the California Natural Resources Agency to have no significant effect on the environment. Staff has evaluated the recommended action and has found it to be exempt under CEQA. The recommended action qualifies for a categorical exemption under CEQA Guidelines section 15306, Information Collection, because it involves data collection, research, and resource evaluation activities that do not result in environmental disturbance. A notice of exemption (NOE) has been prepared (Attachment 3). If the Board approves the recommended action, staff will file the NOE with the State Clearinghouse pursuant to CEQA Guidelines, section 15062.

List of Attachments

Attachment 1 – Resolution 24-04-03

Attachment 2 – Project Map

Attachment 3 – Notice of Exemption

- Exhibit A – Project Map

Conservancy Staff Contact

Joseph Harvey, Senior Environmental Scientist

joseph.harvey@tahoe.ca.gov