

May 23, 2014
Truckee Donner Land Trust
POB 8816
Truckee California 96162

Subject: The Lake Van Norden issue

Dear TDLT Board of Directors,

Attached included is a copy of a detailed letter I sent several months ago to which I can find no letter of response from the board in regard to my concerns on the Lake Van Norden dam issue. This concerns me a lot for the following reasons.

I think that you will agree that I have extensive and long-term experience with Sierra Nevada lakes and watersheds as Director of the UC Davis Tahoe Research Group for over half a century. I have attached a CV in case you are not aware of my past scientific efforts on behalf of our important high elevations lakes, streams and watersheds. In addition, through my consulting company, Ecological Research Associates, I have researched and planned reservoir studies throughout the world.

Maintaining, or actually raising the Lake Van Norden dam is by far the best alternative for the good of the State of California and the region, most of the reasons are included in the attached letter which I referred to above, but since its writing and the California drought, additional reasons for conserving this water source for wildlife, fish, and California agriculture have become painfully clear. The summary of them follows:

- 1) The climate is changing despite what uninformed, or politically motivated, or fossil fuel connected forces like the notorious Koch brothers who maintain well-funded disinformation on this subject, say. This is very much like what the tobacco industry did with smoking. My own well-documented Lake Tahoe research shows significant warming of this large volume of water over the last 30 years, the last 10 years of which occurred during a period of reduced solar radiation.

- 2) The state needs desperately to store more water in reservoirs of all sizes not drain lakes. For example, plans are to eventually raise the Shasta dam to increase storage and build new reservoirs in the state. Lake Van Norden already exists and stores significant quantities of water for the outflow to the South Yuba River which needs to maintain summer flow and provides essential water for threatened and endangered species like the significant frog and toad populations it currently supports. Further its importance for migrating birds and especially waterfowl can scarcely be over emphasized. The endangered species act can certainly be brought to bear on this question should litigation become necessary.
- 3) At a period of drought as we now face in California, fire danger is reduced by humidity in the vicinity of surface waters. Further, should wild fires develop, access by firefighters to expanses of surface water that aircraft and tanker trucks can use, is very important? I should think that the USFS and local fire fighters would be up in arms with the prospect of losing this high elevation source of water.
- 4) Valley agriculture, which is in many ways the real pulse of the economic welfare of the state, is now greatly threatened by water shortage. The Lake Van Norden is one of many water sources for the Bay Delta water system that powers much of California agriculture. To reduce the storage potential of even a small lake works against the states best interests.

In summary, please consider the above points in your deliberations. Much is really at stake despite the fact that there are only a few people immediately adjacent to Lake Van Norden to form a powerful lobbying group to save the lake. Now is the time to raise the dam or at the very least repair it. I doubt that your board would wish to make a decision which would have the long term result of reducing California's clean water supply at a time when standing water resources are urgently need to be increased not decreased.

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Enc. Earlier letter