

LAKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS – FULL AGENDA SUBMISSION

To: Lake County Board of Supervisors

From: Sterling Wellman, Lake County Resident

Re: Agenda Item 7.4 – General Plan 2050, Energy Policy, Public Safety, and Funding Breakdown Request

PURPOSE

This document is submitted for inclusion in the public record for Agenda Item 7.4. It outlines concerns regarding public safety, geothermal development, infrastructure, policy gaps, and the allocation of additional funds under the PlaceWorks contract.

ROLE AND STATEMENT

I am bringing this concern forward in my role as Vice Chair of the Eastern Regional Town Hall Committee. I am not speaking on behalf of the full committee, but from my responsibility to ensure that my region has the safeguards it needs.

EVACUATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Areas such as Spring Valley are identified fire hazard zones with limited evacuation routes, relying primarily on Highway 20 as a single ingress and egress point.

The 2008 General Plan did not require infrastructure expansion, and the 2050 plan still fails to provide clear plans, funding, or timelines to correct these life safety issues.

GEOHERMAL AND GEOLOGIC RISK

A company known as EGX is actively working with Lake County on geothermal development within this region.

This area includes active fault systems such as the Bartlett Springs Fault near Indian Valley Reservoir.

This is a hydrothermal system where faults act as pathways for fluids, gases, and contaminants.

Enhanced Geothermal Systems involve high-pressure injection and fracturing, increasing risks of seismic activity, groundwater impact, and contaminant movement.

SULPHUR BANK LESSON

Lake County already has a Superfund site at Sulphur Bank, where disturbance of a hydrothermal system mobilized mercury contamination.

Proceeding without policy risks repeating that outcome.

POLICY GAP

There is no defined Energy Policy in the General Plan.

Under California Government Code Section 65303, the County has full authority to adopt an Energy Policy without delay.

There is no requirement to wait for an ad hoc committee.

FUNDING CONCERN – AGENDA ITEM 7.4

The County is requesting approximately \$30,000 in additional funding for document compliance and website updates.

At this stage, over \$2.3 million has already been spent on the General Plan process.

REQUEST FOR BREAKDOWN

Before approval, a detailed breakdown must be provided showing:

- The portion required for legal compliance (ADA / DOJ)
- The portion allocated to presentation, formatting, and website enhancements
- Any discretionary spending included in the request

PRIORITY RECOMMENDATION

Compliance funding may be necessary and should be considered separately.

However, any discretionary spending related to presentation should be held until critical policy gaps are resolved, including:

- Adoption of an Energy Policy
- Evacuation and infrastructure planning

- Protection of groundwater and environmental systems

CONCLUSION

Lake County is spending public funds on presentation while lacking core policies that protect public safety, environmental health, and financial stability.

Without proper safeguards, geothermal development could create long-term damage similar to existing contamination sites.

Only required compliance funding should be approved at this time. All discretionary spending should be deferred until foundational policies are complete.

Respectfully submitted,

Sterling Wellman