

# Staff Report 05

**LESSEE/APPLICANT:**

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Eleanor Hewlett Gimon and Sally M. Hewlett, Trustees of the Hewlett Family Trust of January 1, 1992

**PROPOSED ACTION:**

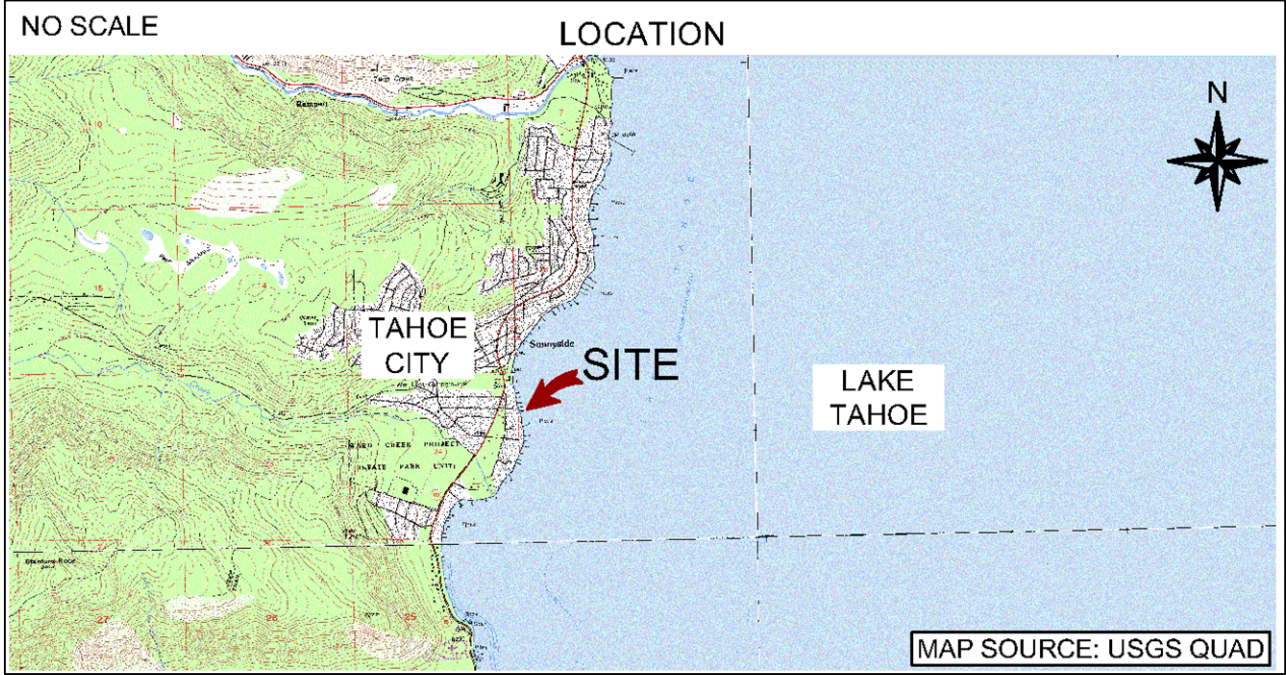
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Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use.

**AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:**

Sovereign land in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 2040 and 2050 West Lake Boulevard, Tahoe City, Placer County (as shown in Figure 1).

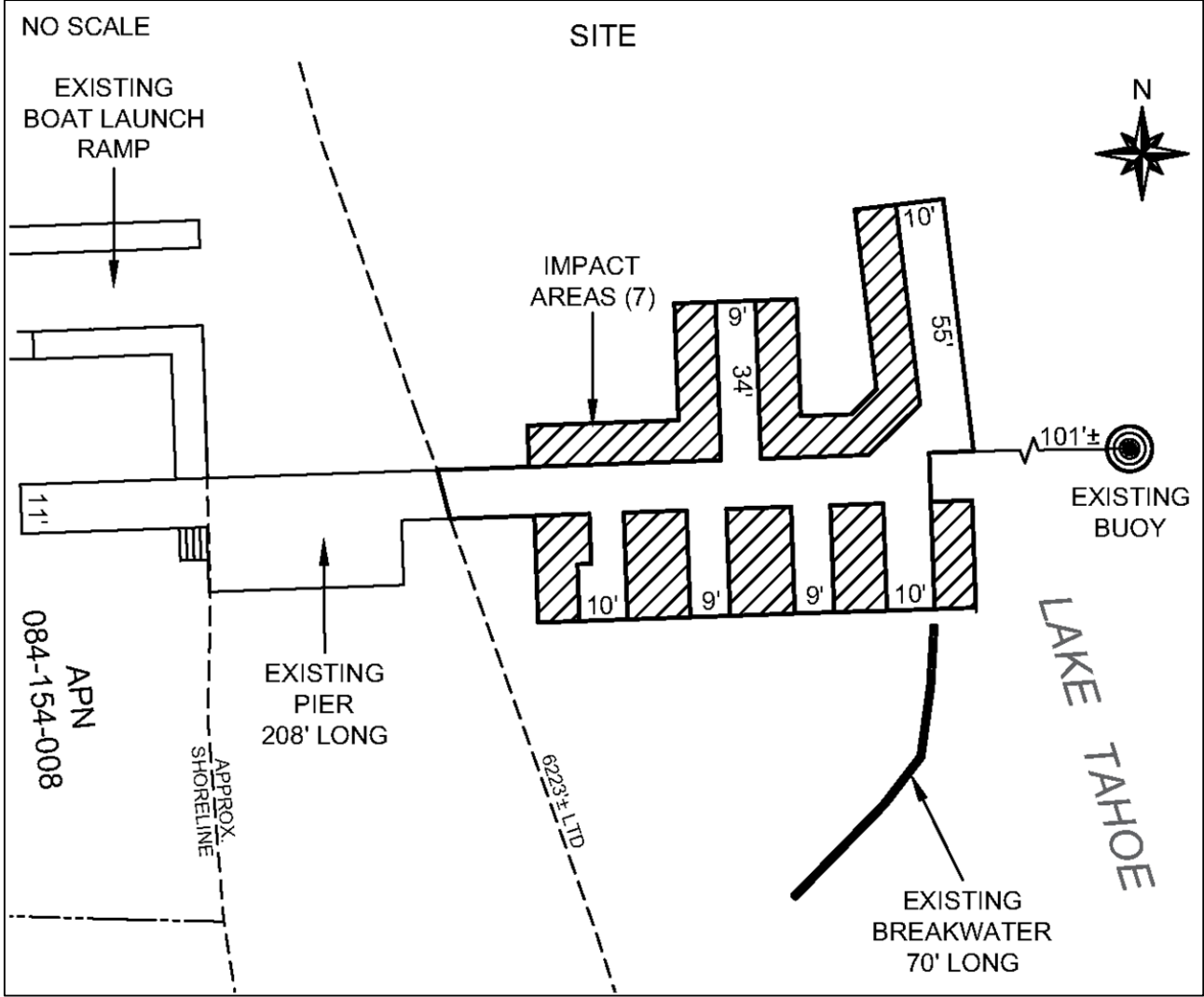
**Figure 1. Location**



**AUTHORIZED USE:**

Use of an existing rock crib pier, breakwater, and one mooring buoy (as shown in Figure 2).

**Figure 2. Site Map**



NOTE: This depiction of the lease premises is based on unverified information provided by the Applicant or other parties and is not a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

**TERM:**

10 years, beginning April 23, 2024.

**CONSIDERATION:**

\$4,425 per year, with annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

**SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:**

- Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
- Lessee expressly acknowledges that a permit or registration from the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) may be required for the Authorized Improvements and failure to obtain a permit or registration from TRPA and maintain compliance with that permit or registration may result in TRPA imposing civil penalties and will constitute a breach of the lease.
- The lease provides that signs shall be posted on each side of the pier to indicate passage and to provide continuous shoreline access to the Public Trust Easement below elevation 6228.75 feet, Lake Tahoe Datum (LTD).
- Lessee shall not store any personal items or construct any improvements in the Public Trust easement which may impair the public's right of access for navigation, fishing, and Public Trust-consistent recreational uses.

**STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

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**AUTHORITY:**

Public Resources Code sections 6005, 6216, 6301, 6501.1, 6503, 6503.5, and 6505.5; California Code of Regulations, title 2, sections 2000 and 2003.

**PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:**

On April 23, 2014, the Commission authorized the issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to Eleanor Hewlett Gimon and Sally M. Hewlett, Trustees of the Hewlett Family Trust of January 1, 1992, for the use of a rock crib pier, breakwater, and one existing mooring buoy ([Item 36, April 23, 2014](#)). This lease expired on April 22, 2024.

The Applicant is now applying for an issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use for the use of an existing rock crib pier, breakwater, and one mooring buoy. The mooring buoy was registered with TRPA on January 3, 2024 (Registration No. 10315).

The Applicant owns three contiguous littoral parcels: Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 084-184-007, 084-184-008, and 084-184-009. The existing rock crib pier extends from APN 084-184-008. A portion of the pier on the north side extends out and is adjacent to APN 084-184-007. The breakwater extends from the south side of the pier and is adjacent to APNs 084-164-008 and 084-164-009. The existing mooring

buoy is located directly lakeward of APN 084-184-008 and occupies a relatively small area of the lake.

The area immediately upland of the subject pier is gently sloped and sandy, making the immediate upland topography easily traversable. However, there is an existing boat launch on the upland property north of the pier that is outside Commission jurisdiction. This boat launch inhibits lateral public access for pedestrians and lake-related activities within the Public Trust easement during periods of high water, during which public access through the Public Trust easement can only be accomplished by passing over the pier or around its upland terminus. However, there are no structures that allow the public to ascend from the shore, over the pier, and then back down to the shore, and the upland terminus of the pier is on the Applicant's property. Therefore, although the public can pass below the pier during periods of low water, public access within the Public Trust easement is not readily available during periods of high water. To ensure that public access remains available at all water levels, the Applicant agrees to allow the public to pass and repass through the upland parcel around the shore end of the pier and boat launch. The proposed lease includes a provision to this effect. Additionally, the proposed lease includes a provision requiring the Applicant to post signs that clearly identify the designated public passageway. These signs shall be in place at all times and will ensure that the public is aware that they can utilize said passageway when traversing the shore.

The subject breakwater is used to prevent wind-driven wave action and therefore protect docked boats from marine hazards. The subject improvements are privately owned and maintained and facilitate recreational boating. Recreational boating is a water-dependent use that is generally consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine. The California Legislature has identified private recreational boating facilities as an authorized use of Public Trust land. (Pub. Resources Code, § 6503.5.)

The proposed lease does not alienate the State's fee simple interest or permanently impair public rights. The lease is limited to a 10-year term, does not grant the lessee exclusive rights to the lease premises, and reserves an easement to the public for Public Trust-consistent uses. Upon termination of the lease, the lessee may be required to remove all improvements from State land and restore the lease premises to their original condition.

The proposed lease requires the lessee to insure the lease premises and indemnify the State for any liability incurred as a result of the lessee's activities thereon. The

lease also requires the payment of annual rent to compensate the people of the State for the occupation of the public land involved.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE:**

Climate change significantly affects inland non-tidal lakes such as Lake Tahoe. The frequency and severity of natural disasters like flooding, wildfire, drought, extreme heat, and storms are increasing throughout the state of California, including the Sierra Nevada mountains, and will continue to accelerate through the end of the century. Structures along the shores of inland lakes are particularly vulnerable to the more frequent and extreme weather events and shifts in seasonal characteristics.

According to [California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment](#), released in 2018, the most significant impacts of climate change in the Sierra Nevada Region are more intense heat, precipitation extremes, declining snowpacks, and changes in streamflow timing. The long-term warming trend will lead to warmer and shorter winters, and longer and drier summers. Successive dry and warm winters are resulting in minimal snowpack, increased winter streamflows and floods, and decreased spring and summer runoff. Prolonged low lake levels will become normal. Low lake level conditions can create more expansive beaches and increased shoreline access in dry months. However, these conditions interfere with boat launching and mooring facilities. This impact is most noticeable where the facilities are sited on shallow, low gradient lake bottom locations.

Dry winters will be punctuated with occasional wet years where prolonged and excessive precipitation can produce flash floods. High precipitation in these years will result in higher lake levels, causing beaches to narrow and reducing public access. Extra saturation of the soil can increase erosion, especially following intense wildfire seasons. Surface runoff water may carry more sediment into the lake, adversely impacting water quality and clarity.

Climate change may also lead to more intense and unpredictable storm events and winds. These storms may deviate from prevailing wind patterns for the region. These winds can accelerate shoreline erosion in some areas or cause erosion in areas not typically subject to erosion. Additionally, these winds can increase wave damage on structures and boats along the lake.

Improvements authorized under this lease may require more frequent inspection and maintenance to ensure they are not displaced during storm events. Watercraft

moored to buoys, piers, or docks are also vulnerable to high wind events and damaging waves.

**CONCLUSION:**

For all the reasons above, staff believes the issuance of this lease will not substantially interfere with Public Trust needs at this location, at this time, and for the term of the proposed lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

**OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:**

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1. Approval or denial of the application is a discretionary action by the Commission. Each time the Commission approves or rejects a use of sovereign land, it exercises legislatively delegated authority and responsibility as trustee of the State's Public Trust lands as authorized by law. If the Commission denies the lease, the Applicant may be required to remove the existing improvements. The lessee has no right to a new lease or to renewal of any previous lease.
2. This action is consistent with the "Leading Climate Activism" and "Meeting Evolving Public Trust Needs" Strategic Focus Areas of the Commission's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan.
3. Staff recommends that the Commission find that this activity is exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) as a categorically exempt project. The project is exempt under Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301.

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061.

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

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It is recommended that the Commission:

**CEQA FINDING:**

Find that the activity is exempt from the requirements of CEQA pursuant to California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15061 as a categorically exempt project, Class 1, Existing Facilities; California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15301.

**PUBLIC TRUST AND STATE'S BEST INTERESTS:**

Find that the proposed lease will not substantially impair the public rights to navigation and fishing or substantially interfere with Public Trust needs and values at this location, at this time, and for the term of the lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

**AUTHORIZATION:**

Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning April 23, 2024, for a term of 10 years, for the use of an existing rock crib pier, breakwater, and one mooring buoy; with annual rent in the amount of \$4,425 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.