Meeting Date: 10/21/26
Lease Number: 9368
Staff: M. Harless

Staff Report 23

APPLICANT:

Meika A. Rouda and Davoa R. Rouda, Trustee of "The Marilyn Sue Rouda Survivor's Trust" dated April 9, 1986, and Meika A. Rouda, Trustees of The Meika A. Rouda Trust dated June 2, 1999

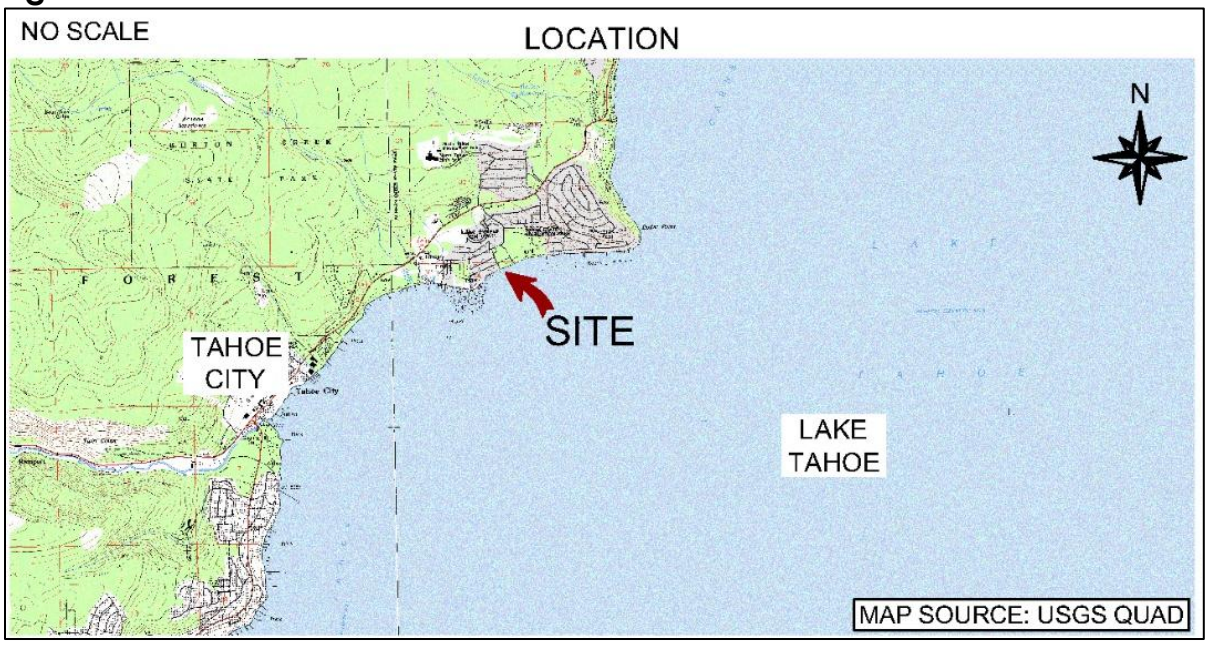
PROPOSED ACTION:

Issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use.

AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:

Sovereign land in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 10 Aspen Street, near Tahoe City, Placer County (as shown in Figure 1).

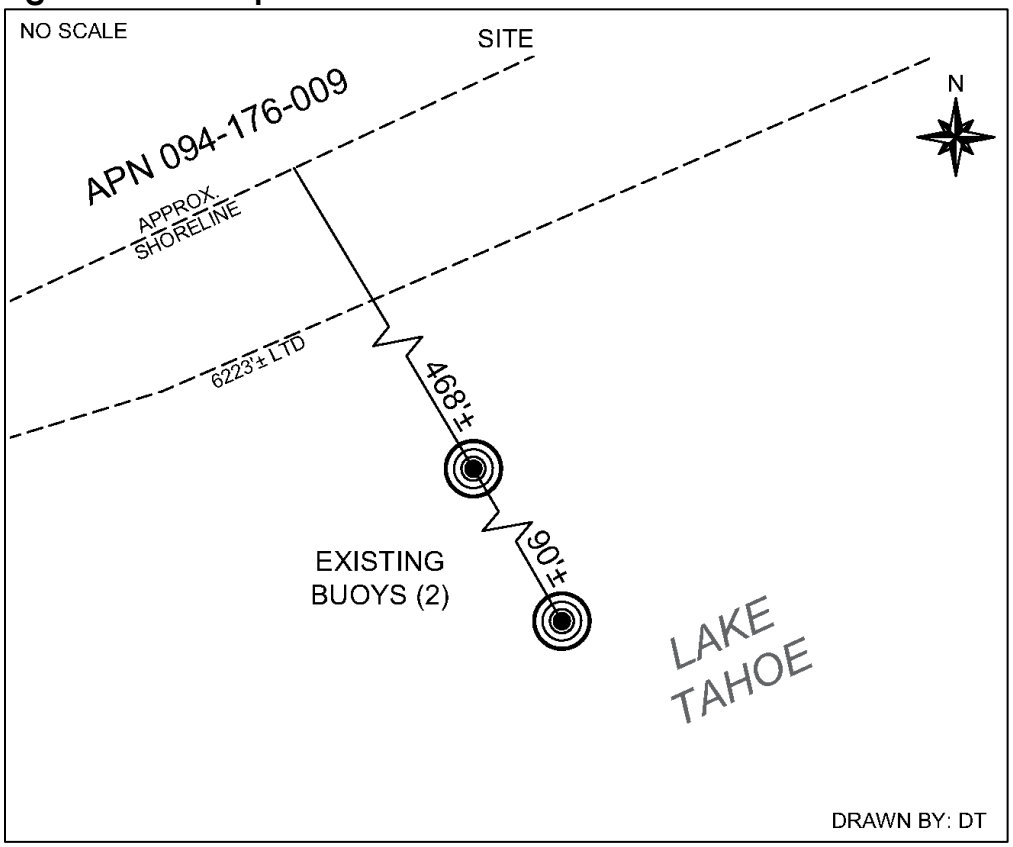
Figure 1. Location



AUTHORIZED USE:

Use of two existing mooring buoys (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 October 13, 2026.

CONSIDERATION:

$546 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:

- 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

may result in TRPA imposing civil penalties and will constitute a breach of the lease.

- Lessee shall not store any personal item or construct any improvements in the Public Trust easement, that may impair the public's right of access for navigation, fishing, and Public Trust consistent recreational uses.
- Lessee shall not move or relocate the existing mooring buoys authorized under this lease without prior written authorization of the Lessor.
- The provisions of Section 3, Paragraph 11 shall also extend to the period of Lessee's unauthorized occupation of state-owned lands, from November 8, 2024 to October 12, 2026.

STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:

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 October 13, 2016, the Commission authorized issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to Ronald H. Rouda and Marilyn Sue Rouda, Trustees of the Ronald H. Rouda Qualified Personal Residence Trust #1, dated June 2, 1999; Marilyn Sue Rouda and Ronald H. Rouda, Trustees of the Marilyn Sue Rouda Qualified Personal Residence Trust #1, dated June 2, 1999; Davia R. Rouda and Meika A. Rouda, Trustees of the Davia R. Rouda Trust dated June 2, 1999; and Meika A. Rouda and Davia R. Rouda, Trustees of the Meika A. Rouda Trust dated June 2, 1999, for the use and maintenance of two existing mooring buoys not previously authorized by the Commission (Item 4). That lease expired on October 12, 2026.

There have been several transfers of ownership over the 10-year lease term without notification to the Commission. On November 8, 2024, ownership of the upland parcel was transferred to Meika A. Rouda and Davoa R. Rouda, Trustee of "The Marilyn Sue Rouda Survivor's Trust" dated April 9, 1986, and Meika A. Rouda, Trustees of The Meika A. Rouda Trust dated June 2, 1999.

The Applicant is now applying for issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use for use of two existing mooring buoys. Staff recommends issuance of a lease

beginning October 13, 2026, the day after the prior lease expired. The proposed lease will require the Applicant to indemnify the State for the entire period of unauthorized occupation, ensuring the State is protected. Rent for the current lease has been paid through October 12, 2026.

The existing mooring buoys were registered with TRPA on April 23, 2026 (Registration No. 11378). The two mooring buoys have existed for many years at this location, are located directly lakeward of the upland property, and occupy a relatively small area of the lake. The two mooring buoys 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:

INTRODUCTION:

Climate change significantly affects inland non-tidal lakes such as Lake Tahoe, and its effects are increasing throughout the Sierra Nevada mountains. According to California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment (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. These impacts create hazardous conditions like flooding, landslides, wildfire, drought, extreme heat, and severe storms. Structures along the shores of inland lakes are particularly vulnerable to the more frequent and extreme weather events, year-to-year changes in total precipitation, and shifts in seasonal characteristics.

DATA & PROJECTIONS:

Temperatures in the Sierra Nevada are expected to increase six to ten degrees Fahrenheit on average by the end of the century, causing the snowline to shift upslope 1,500 to 3,000 feet in elevation (California's Fourth Climate Change Assessment, 2018). The long-term warming trend will lead to warmer and shorter winters and longer and drier summers. The warmer winters will reduce winter snowpacks by up to 60 percent across most of the Sierra Nevada and will result in increased winter streamflows and floods and decreased spring and summer runoff. Loss of snowpack is expected to dry soils 15 to 40 percent below their historical norms. Hotter, drier summer seasons and low water years will increase stress to vegetation, elevating wildfire risk and fire severity in the Tahoe Basin.

Dry winters will be punctuated with exceedingly wet years and higher temperatures will result in more rain-on-snow events (Integrated Vulnerability Assessment of Climate Change in the Lake Tahoe Basin, 2020). Atmospheric river systems will become more common. These events produce both flash floods and higher than normal seasonal flooding which may shift earlier in the year. Higher soil moisture will increase erosion and elevate landslide risk, particularly following intense wildfire seasons.

ANALYSIS:

The greatest vulnerability to recreational facilities is from flooding, landslides, and wildfire hazards (Integrated Vulnerability Assessment of Climate Change in the Lake Tahoe Basin, 2020). The Sierra Nevada is expected to experience year-to-year variability in precipitation and may shift between extreme wet and dry periods. High precipitation years or successive years will result in higher lake levels, causing beaches to narrow and reducing public access. Surface runoff may carry more sediment into the lake, adversely impacting water quality, clarity, and increasing risk of algal blooms (UC Davis Tahoe Environmental Research Center, 2024). Conversely, low lake levels will become normal during periods of extended drought. Low lake level conditions can create more expansive beaches and increased shoreline access in dry months. However, these conditions could make some shoreline areas too shallow for effective recreational use of piers, boat docks, and mooring buoys. During drought, structures will also be exposed to heat and wind that may accelerate deterioration or reduce the structural integrity of certain structures.

Additionally, atmospheric rivers and extreme weather events are expected to increase in the high Sierra. Storms may deviate from prevailing wind patterns for the

region. Wind-driven waves can accelerate shoreline erosion in some areas or cause erosion in areas not typically subject to erosion. Winds can also increase wave damage on structures and boats along the lake.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

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. Replacing older structural components with materials designed to better withstand extreme heat, wind events, and storms can reduce the likelihood of degradation and damage to structures. Any future construction or activities on State land would require a separate authorization from the Commission.

Regular maintenance, as required by the lease, may reduce the risks from extreme temperatures and rain. Pursuant to the proposed lease, the Applicant acknowledges that the lease premises and adjacent upland are located in an area that may be subject to the effects of climate change.

CONCLUSION:

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

OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:

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. 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 issuance of the lease is exempt from the requirements of 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:

It is recommended that the Commission:

CEQA FINDING:

Find that issuance of the lease 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 October 13, 2026, for a term of 10 years, for the use of two existing mooring buoys; annual rent in the amount of $546, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than $1,000,000 per occurrence.