

SENATE COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES AND WATER

Senator Josh Becker, Chair
2025 - 2026 Regular

Bill No:	AB 2679	Hearing Date:	July 1, 2026
Author:	Hadwick		
Version:	June 10, 2026 Amended		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Edith Hannigan		

Subject: State highways: public parking: traffic control

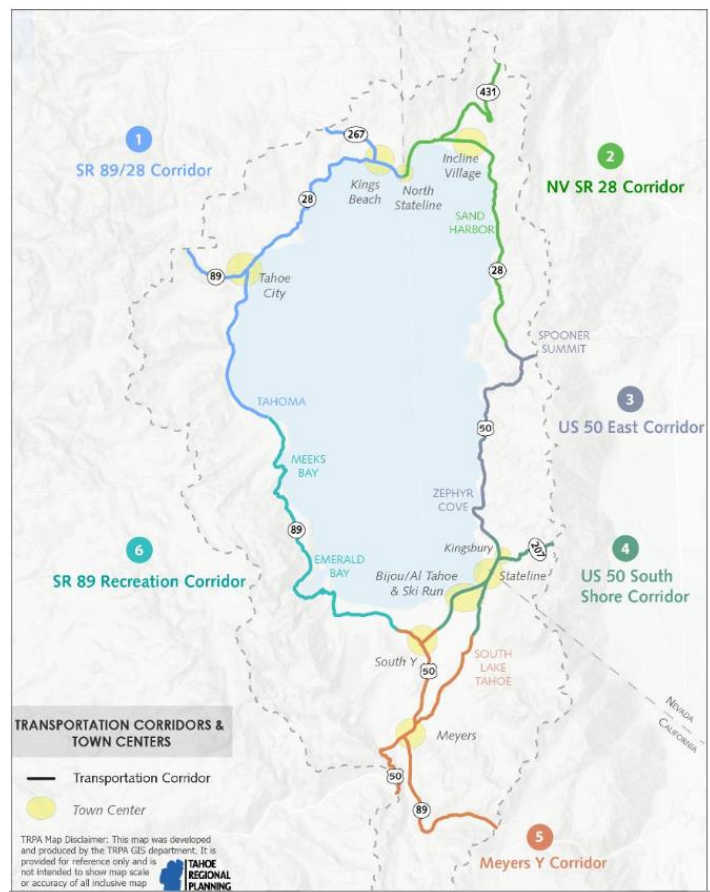
SUMMARY

This bill would authorize the Department of Transportation, within the Tahoe corridor, to contract with a state agency, a local government, or the Tahoe Transportation District to prevent unsafe parking and pedestrian movement and enhance public access to the corridor and public recreation sites.

BACKGROUND AND EXISTING LAW

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). TRPA was created through a bi-state compact between Nevada and California and serves as the region's federally designated metropolitan planning organization. In that role, the agency updates the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) every four years with projects and strategies needed to safely connect the region, improve the environment, and revitalize communities. TRPA works closely with local and regional partners to increase transportation funding for key projects that reduce vehicle miles traveled and greenhouse gas emissions.

Transportation Corridors in the Tahoe Region. The Tahoe Region is divided into six corridors based on the unique transportation, recreation, and quality of life needs of each. Corridor planning allows TRPA to leverage its transportation and land use policies to create synergies and maximize the cost efficiencies and benefits of projects. The approach to each corridor is adaptive to recognize and respond to localized needs, but planning always includes active transportation, sustainable recreation, housing, and transit-oriented development within town centers.



State Route 89 Recreation Corridor. State Route (SR) Highway 89 Recreation Corridor is a two-lane mountain roadway running from Meyers, California north along the West Shore of Lake Tahoe. The SR 89 corridor includes 17.5 miles of highway with adjacent recreation uses, extending from West Way in El Dorado County north to the El Dorado/Placer County line at Sugar Pine Point State Park. The area features some of Lake Tahoe's most popular recreation sites, including beaches, the iconic Emerald Bay and D.L. Bliss State Parks, and access to Fallen Leaf Lake and the Desolation Wilderness Area. The roadway serves approximately 1 million vehicle trips each year.

The concentration of recreation in a narrow two-lane corridor creates persistent public safety, environmental, and transportation challenges, including:

- Unsafe and illegal roadside parking along SR-89 from Inspiration Point to D.L. Bliss State Park, frequently stopping traffic and creating serious safety hazards for drivers, pedestrians, and cyclists.
- Vehicle congestion that impedes emergency vehicle access and degrades the visitor experience.
- Stormwater runoff and soil erosion caused by vehicles parking on unpaved shoulders, contributing fine sediment and pollutants to tributaries and ultimately to Lake Tahoe.
- Limited parking infrastructure is unable to meet peak summer demand, especially on weekends and holidays.

A 2025 safety review recorded over a 40-day period documented severe and persistent roadway hazards in the Emerald Bay corridor, including 759 wrong-way drivers and more than 20,500 pedestrians crossing State Route 89 in locations with no crosswalks or pedestrian facilities, and conditions characterized by illegal shoulder parking, rockfall hazards, no bicycle or pedestrian facilities, and people walking in active travel lanes.

Existing Law:

- 1) Ratifies the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact. (Government Code (GOV) § 66800)
- 2) Establishes the California Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. (GOV § 67040)
- 3) Establishes that the State Department of Transportation (CalTrans) has “full possession and control of all state highways and all property and rights in property acquired for state highway purposes.” (Streets and Highways Code (SHC) § 90)
- 4) Authorizes Caltrans, for highways under its jurisdiction, to place signs or markings prohibiting or restricting stopping, standing, or parking where Caltrans believes it is dangerous or would interfere with traffic. It also makes it unlawful to violate those posted restrictions. (Vehicle Code (VEH) § 22505)
- 5) Authorizes CalTrans to “construct, maintain, and operate” parking facilities along the state highway system when they reduce congestion or improve highway safety. The statute also states those facilities are part of the state highway. (SHC § 146.5)

- 6) Prohibits certain activities, including long vehicles, loitering, camping, vending, or commercial activity on CalTrans parking facilities. (VEH § 22518)
- 7) Authorizes Caltrans to adopt rules and regulations governing the time and manner of use of safety roadside rests, and those rules may be enforced by authorized state employees and peace officers. (SHC § 225)
- 8) Establishes prohibited activities in roadside rest areas or vista points. (VEH § 22520.6)
- 9) Authorizes the removal of vehicles left too long in roadside rest areas or viewpoints, subject to the statutory time limits. (VEH § 22651(s))

PROPOSED LAW

This bill would:

- 1) Establish the Safe Tahoe Travel Act of 2026.
- 2) Establish relevant definitions in the act, including:
 - a) “District” means the Tahoe Transportation District established by Article IX of the Tahoe Regional Planning Compact (Title 7.4 (commencing with Section 66800) of the Government Code).
 - b) “Public parking” means a parking space or parking facility, including, but not limited to, a parking deck, parking garage, parking structure, or paved or unpaved parking lot, that members of the public are invited or permitted to enter and use.
 - c) “Region” means Lake Tahoe and the adjacent parts of the Counties of El Dorado and Placer lying within the Tahoe Basin in the State of California.
 - d) “Tahoe corridor” means the portions of State Routes 28, 50, and 89 that are within the region.
 - e) “Traffic calming” means a combination of measures and techniques intended to do any of the following:
 - i.) Reduce vehicle speeds.
 - ii.) Promote safe and pleasant conditions for motorists, bicyclists, pedestrians, and residents.
 - iii.) Improve the environment and usability of roadways.
 - iv.) Improve real and perceived safety for nonmotorized traffic.
 - v.) “Traffic calming” does not include a measure or technique, or a combination thereof, that reduces the number of vehicle lanes in the Tahoe corridor.
- 3) Authorize CalTrans to contract with certain entities in the Tahoe corridor for:
 - a) Preventing unsafe parking and pedestrian movement on a state highway.
 - b) Enhancing public access to the Tahoe corridor and public recreations.
- 4) Authorize the contract between CalTrans and other entities to include authorities to issue citations.

- 5) Prohibit the issuance of citations in any area within the Tahoe corridor where there is no access to a recreation destination from the public parking using public transit or pedestrian pathways.
- 6) Require entities authorized to issue citations to:
 - a) Establish minimum qualifications for employees.
 - b) Provide training to the employees.
 - c) Provide appropriate equipment.
- 7) Create the Tahoe Safe Recreation Access Fund (Fund).
- 8) Require moneys collected pursuant to the Safe Tahoe Travel Act to be deposited into the Fund.
- 9) Continuously appropriate moneys from the Fund to CalTrans for purposes including, but not limited to:
 - a) The operation and maintenance of public parking, public transit, and pedestrian pathways.
 - b) The installation of adequate signage to support safety and provide information to people using the public parking.
 - c) The development, operation, and maintenance of amenities for people using the public parking, including, but not limited to, restrooms and trash cans.
- 10) Create, in the Fund, the Tahoe Safe Recreation Access Penalty Account (Account).
- 11) Require all penalty moneys collected pursuant to the Safe Tahoe Travel Act be deposited into the Account.
- 12) Continuously appropriate moneys from the Account to CalTrans for enforcement of parking restrictions and prohibitions in the Tahoe corridor.

ARGUMENTS IN SUPPORT

According to the author, "Lake Tahoe is a national and international resource of unique ecological, recreational, and economic importance. Tahoe's natural beauty supports a regional economy exceeding 5 billion dollars annually and provides outdoor recreation for millions of Californians and visitors each year. Growing visitation at Lake Tahoe, especially near Emerald Bay, has led to dangerous conditions for hikers, visitors and residents. Assembly Bill 2679 creates a framework to improve safety along highways in the Tahoe Basin and promote the public's access to Lake Tahoe."

ARGUMENTS IN OPPOSITION

None received.

COMMENTS

Double referral and Senate Transportation Committee Amendments. This bill was double referred to this committee and the Senate Committee on Transportation. This committee is the committee of second referral; the Transportation Committee will be hearing this bill on June 30, 2026. Amendments proposed by the Senate Transportation Committee will be accepted there and crossed by this committee.

Nevada State Route 28 Corridor Plan and Senate Bill 426. SR 28 in Nevada is the Lake Tahoe Region's first corridor plan, developed in 2014 and updated in 2019 to comprehensively address safety, environmental, and recreation access concerns on the East Shore. The corridor extends from Incline Village south past Sand Harbor to Spooner Lake, passing through Tahoe's longest stretch of undeveloped shoreline--eleven miles from Lakeshore Drive in Incline Village to U.S. 50 on the East Shore.

In 2025, the State of Nevada enacted Senate Bill 426, creating the Lake Tahoe Basin Scenic Byway Corridor Recreation Safety Zone on highways serving major recreation destinations. The legislation codifies the corridor plan and enables enhanced authority for parking management, enforcement, and public access improvements.

Managing traffic and safety along SR 89. The SR89 Recreation Corridor Management Plan (SR89 Corridor Plan), adopted in 2020 through a collaborative effort among TRPA, Caltrans, El Dorado County, the Tahoe Transportation District, U.S. Forest Service, California Department of Parks and Recreation, and other partners, identified challenges and potential solutions to reduce environmental and recreation impacts from Pope Beach to Sugar Pine State Park, including Emerald Bay.

The vision of the SR89 Corridor Plan is to provide a safe and seamless travel experience that inspires every visitor and resident to walk, bike, roll, or use transit to access the corridor's diverse recreation offerings to better manage congestion, enhance environmental resiliency, and allow people to focus on enjoying the special nature of Lake Tahoe's southwest shoreline.

Existing law does not provide a mechanism for CalTrans to delegate the use and management of state property for the purposes of preventing unsafe parking and pedestrian movement on a state highway or enhancing public access to the Tahoe corridor and public recreation sites in the face of unsafe conditions.

Transportation Committee Amendments. The amendments proposed by the Senate Transportation Committee include:

- 1) Amending the definition of "Tahoe corridor" –

"Tahoe corridor" means the portions of State Routes 28, 50, and 89 that are within the region where traffic calming measures or parking facilities are needed to improve safety and provide more equitable access to public lands, as designated pursuant to the contract described in Section 898.2.

- 2) Deleting the exclusion of "a measure or technique, or combination thereof, that reduces the number of vehicle lanes" from the definition of "traffic calming."
- 3) Authorizing CalTrans to contract with entities to "[designate] the portions of state highways that constitute the Tahoe corridor, and placing and maintaining appropriate signage along those designated portions to indicate that they are a portion of the Tahoe corridor."
- 4) Amending the areas where citations shall not be issued -

The contract shall prohibit the issuance of a citation in any area ~~within the Tahoe corridor where there is no access to a recreation destination from the public~~

~~parking using public transit or pedestrian pathways.~~ outside of the Tahoe corridor.

- 5) Authorizing moneys from the Fund to be used for:
 - a) the development and construction of public parking, transit, and pedestrian pathways, in addition to the operation and maintenance thereof.
 - b) the installation of technology, in addition to signage, to provide public information.
 - c) the construction of amenities for people using the public parking, in addition to the development, operation, and maintenance thereof.
- 6) Authorizing CalTrans to accomplish these projects by contract with other entities.
- 7) Authorizing the Legislature to appropriate funds from the Fund or the Account, rather than continuously appropriates.
- 8) Making grammatical changes and nonsubstantive clarifying changes.

SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS:

Amendment #1

Accept amendments from Senate Transportation Committee

SUPPORT

Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (sponsor)
California Tahoe Alliance
El Dorado; County of
League to Save Lake Tahoe

OPPOSITION

None received

-- END --