



## Tahoe Basin deserves 'state of emergency' status

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While the snow falls lightly over the Tahoe Basin and the heat of summer's fires are but a memory, it is a good time to brainstorm ideas on how to better protect our pristine environment from the ravages of wildfires.

The California-Nevada Tahoe Basin Fire Commission is doing just that.

At Friday's commission meeting in South Lake Tahoe, an idea was further discussed which was first hatched this summer by Sens. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif.; Harry Reid D-Nev.; and John Ensign, R-Nev. On their way to the Lake Tahoe Forum, the three came up with the idea of declaring a state of emergency because of the basin's wildfire threat, after viewing the damage from the Angora fire.

This is a good idea, considering that Lake Tahoe is considered a national treasure and millions of federal, state and local money have been invested to keep it that way.

A wildfire in the Tahoe Basin threatens much more than even homes and forests - it threatens years of environmental work accomplished with a huge price tag; the homes and businesses of Tahoe residents who endure stringent environmental regulations on their livelihoods and lifestyles; the political muscle and compromise that has created a delicate balance of ecosystem and economy; and the famed clarity of Lake Tahoe itself.

A state of emergency would streamline wildfire-prevention processes and help with funding for fire prevention and defensible space.

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