

**STAFF REPORT  
C17**

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04/19/18  
PRC 837.1  
M.J. Columbus

**GENERAL LEASE – RECREATIONAL USE**

**APPLICANT:**

Ronald D. Stephens and Kathleen W. Stephens

**PROPOSED LEASE:**

*AREA, LAND TYPE, AND LOCATION:*

Sovereign land in Lake Tahoe, adjacent to 8539 Meeks Bay Avenue, near Meeks Bay, El Dorado County.

*AUTHORIZED USE:*

Continued use and maintenance of an existing pier and one mooring buoy previously authorized by the Commission and use and maintenance of one existing mooring buoy not previously authorized by the Commission.

*LEASE TERM:*

10 years beginning February 27, 2018.

*CONSIDERATION:*

\$1,596 per year, with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment.

*SPECIFIC LEASE PROVISIONS:*

1. Liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.
2. Lessee shall not store any personal items or construct any improvements in the Public Trust easement that may impair the public uses of access, navigation, fishing, and lake-related recreational uses.
3. If Lessee does not have a valid Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA) buoy permit, Lessee is required to obtain such authorization for the mooring buoys within 2 years after the certification of a Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Lake Tahoe Shorezone Ordinance Amendments and approval of the amended ordinances. If Lessee is unable to obtain such

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authorization within the time limit, they may be required to remove the buoys.

4. Lessee expressly acknowledges and agrees that issuance of a lease does not substitute for, or provide preference in, obtaining authorizations from TRPA or any other regulatory agency for the improvements authorized by the Commission.

### **STAFF ANALYSIS AND RECOMMENDATION:**

#### **Authority:**

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

#### **Public Trust and State's Best Interests Analysis:**

On March 25, 2008, the Commission authorized a Recreational Pier Lease for an existing pier and one mooring buoy to Ronald D. Stephens and Kathleen W. Stephens ([Item C10, March 25, 2008](#)). That lease expired on November 30, 2017.

The Applicant is applying for a General Lease – Recreational Use for the continued use and maintenance of the existing pier and one mooring buoy previously authorized by the Commission and use and maintenance of an existing mooring buoy not previously authorized by the Commission. The Applicant's second mooring buoy has been in Lake Tahoe for many years, but staff did not become aware of the second mooring buoy until the Applicant submitted their current application.

Staff recommends issuance of a new lease beginning February 27, 2018. Staff also recommends that the Commission accept compensation from the Applicant for the unauthorized occupation of State land in the amount of \$385 for the period beginning December 1, 2017, the day after the prior lease expired, through February 26, 2018.

The subject improvements 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 pier and mooring buoys have been in Lake Tahoe for many years at this location. The pier is built on pilings with the immediate area of the pier being flat with sand and small to large boulders. The topography and location of upland structures provide access for the pier and allow the

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public to walk or navigate next to and, at lower water levels, under the pier within the Public Trust easement. The two mooring buoys are located directly lakeward of the upland property and occupy a relatively small area of the lake.

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.

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

### **OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION:**

1. The proposed lease was previously scheduled for Commission consideration at the February 27, 2018 meeting. At that meeting, the Commission considered updates to the Lake Tahoe benchmarks ([Item C90, February 27, 2018](#)). The Commission deferred action on revising the existing Lake Tahoe benchmark and directed staff to identify funding options to conduct a thorough evaluation of the various methodologies available to the Commission to assess rent for piers, buoys and other structures located on state property in Lake Tahoe. The Commission further directed staff to continue applying the 2012 Lake Tahoe benchmarks for the next 5 years. Consequently, this item was removed from the February agenda, revised to reflect the current benchmark rates, and rescheduled for the Commission's consideration at the Commission's April meeting.
2. This action is consistent with Strategy 1.1 of the Commission's Strategic Plan to deliver the highest levels of public health and safety in the protection, preservation, and responsible economic use of the lands and resources under the Commission's jurisdiction and Strategy 1.3 to promote, expand, and enhance appropriate public use and access to and along the State's inland and coastal waterways.

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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 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

Authority: Public Resources Code section 21084 and California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 15300 and California Code of Regulations, title 2, section 2905.

**EXHIBITS:**

- A. Land Description
- B. Site and Location Map

**RECOMMENDED ACTION:**

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 2, section 2905, subdivision (a)(2).

**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 foreseeable term of the lease; is consistent with the common law Public Trust Doctrine; and is in the best interests of the State.

**AUTHORIZATION:**

1. Authorize acceptance of compensation from the Applicant in the amount of \$385 for unauthorized occupation of State land for the period beginning December 1, 2017, through February 26, 2018.
2. Authorize issuance of a General Lease – Recreational Use to the Applicant beginning February 27, 2018, for a term of 10 years, for the continued use and maintenance of an existing pier and one mooring buoy previously authorized by the Commission, and use and maintenance of one existing mooring buoy not previously authorized by the Commission, as described in Exhibit A and shown on Exhibit B (for reference purposes only) attached and by this reference made a part hereof; annual rent in the amount of

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\$1,596 with an annual Consumer Price Index adjustment; and liability insurance in an amount no less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence.

**EXHIBIT A**

**PRC 837.1**

**LAND DESCRIPTION**

Three parcels of submerged land situate in the bed of Lake Tahoe, lying adjacent to Lot 1 fractional Section 29, Township 14 North, Range 17 East, MDM., as shown on Official Government Township Plat approved July 29, 1880 County of El Dorado, State of California, and more particularly described as follows:

**PARCEL 1 – PIER**

All those lands underlying an existing pier, two catwalks and stairs lying adjacent to that parcel as described in Exhibit "A" of that Grant Deed recorded December 12, 2007, Document Number 2007-007284 in Official Records of said County.

TOGETHER WITH any applicable impact area(s).

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion(s) lying landward of elevation 6223 feet LTD on the shoreline of said Lake Tahoe.

**PARCEL 2, 3 – BUOYS (2)**

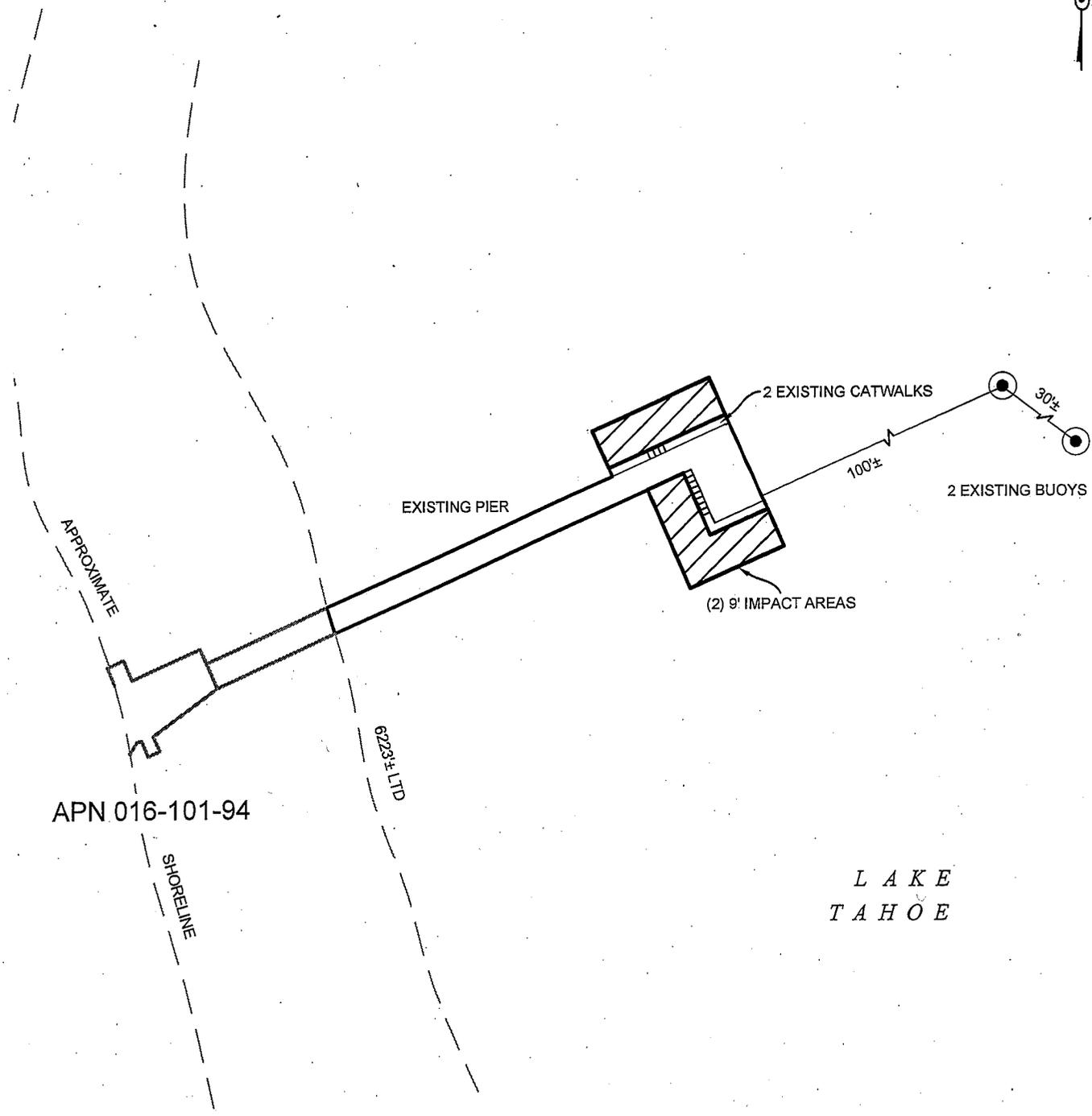
Two circular parcels of land, being 50 feet in diameter, underlying two existing buoys lying adjacent to said parcel.

Accompanying plat is hereby made part of this description.

**END OF DESCRIPTION**

Prepared February 13, 2018 by The California State Lands Commission Boundary Unit.





APN 016-101-94

APPROXIMATE

SHORELINE

6223± LTD

EXISTING PIER

2 EXISTING CATWALKS

(2) 9' IMPACT AREAS

100±

2 EXISTING BUOYS

30±

LAKE  
TAHOE

# EXHIBIT A

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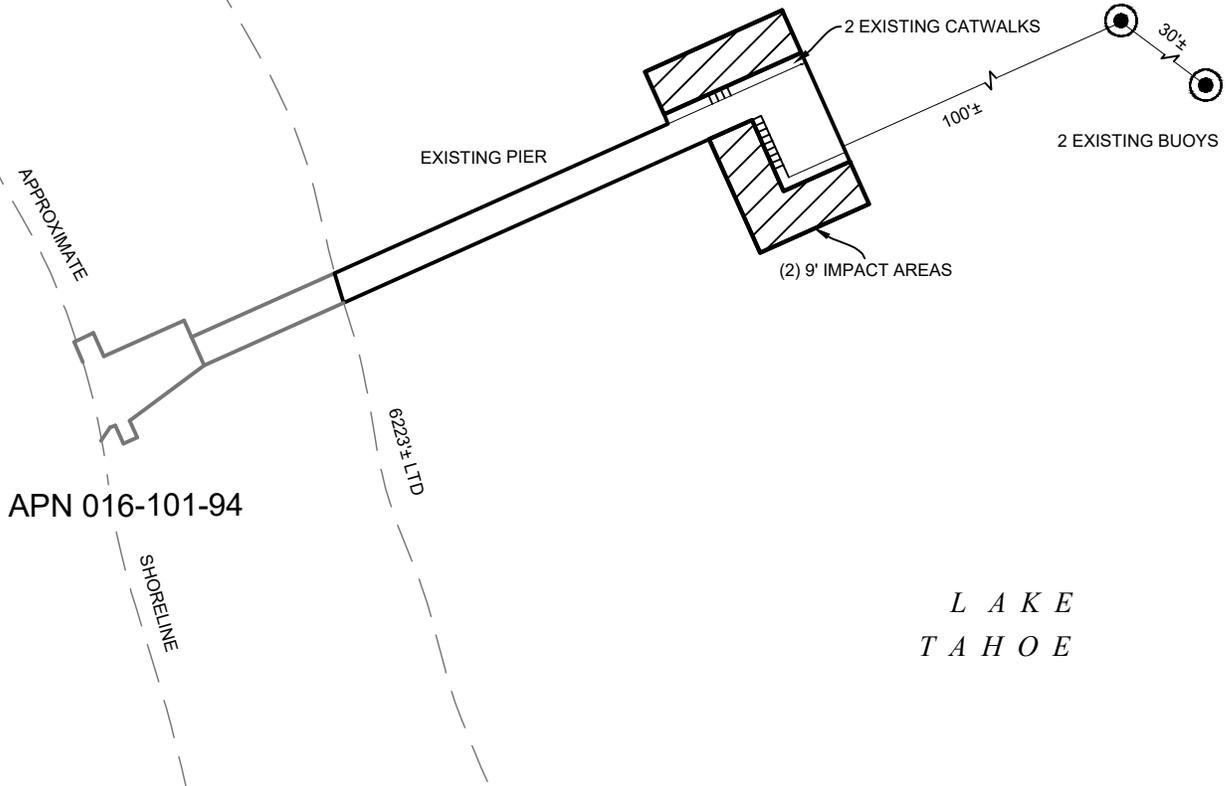
LAND DESCRIPTION PLAT  
PRC 837.1, STEPHENS  
EL DORADO COUNTY

CALIFORNIA STATE  
LANDS COMMISSION



NO SCALE

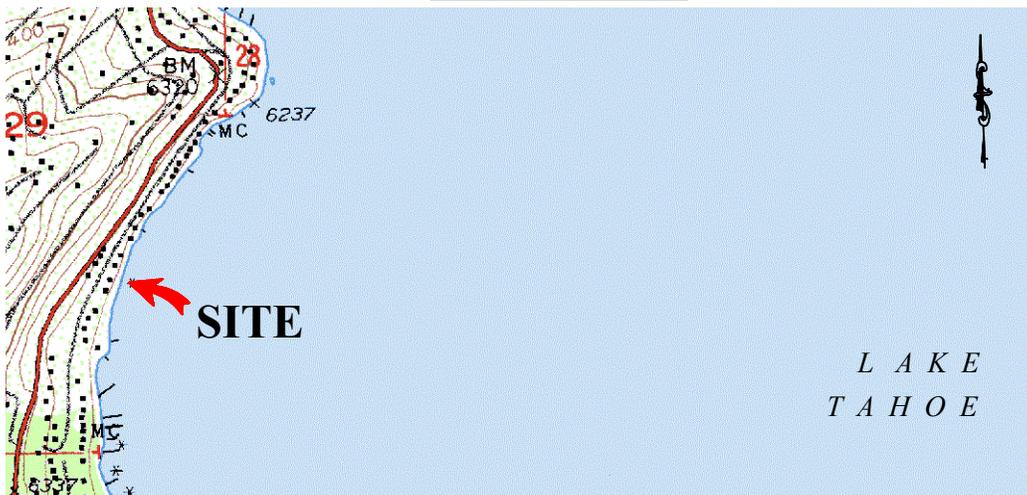
# SITE



8539 MEEKS BAY AVENUE, NEAR MEEKS BAY

NO SCALE

# LOCATION

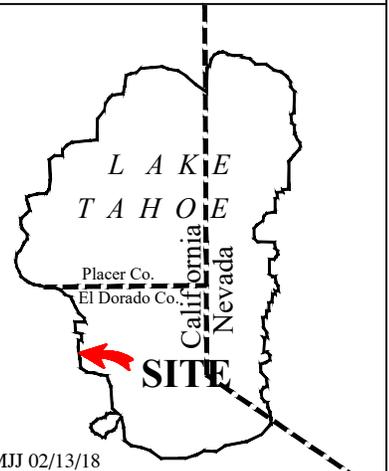


MAP SOURCE: USGS QUAD

This Exhibit is solely for purposes of generally defining the lease premises, is based on unverified information provided by the Lessee or other parties and is not intended to be, nor shall it be construed as, a waiver or limitation of any State interest in the subject or any other property.

# Exhibit B

PRC 837.1  
 STEPHENS  
 APN 016-101-94  
 GENERAL LEASE -  
 RECREATIONAL USE  
 EL DORADO COUNTY



MJJ 02/13/18