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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**TRUCKEE RIVER OPERATING AGREEMENT:
*Finally implemented after 27 years***

(Reno, NV) A carefully crafted strategy to guide management of the Truckee River’s waters is now in effect, ending decades of uncertainty over one of Northern Nevada and California’s most precious resources.

More than 27 years in the making, the Truckee River Operating Agreement (TROA) now guides use of the river that winds nearly 120 miles from the mountains of Lake Tahoe to Pyramid Lake. Supporters say the long-pursued plan brings the river’s management into modern times, protects the area from protracted droughts and offers a promising future for the region as a whole.

“This is an absolute game-changer,” said Sparks Mayor Geno Martini, chairman of the board of directors of the Truckee Meadows Water Authority, a primary signatory party to TROA. Others include the U.S. Department of Interior, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Tribe and the states of Nevada and California.

“We have waited literally decades for this day and it could not come at a more opportune time with the potential for a fifth year of drought in 2016,” Martini said. TROA, described by Martini as the “biggest and most important piece” of the TMWA’s water resource plan, will triple the amount of water that can be stored in Truckee River reservoirs for use during times of drought.

The agreement also brings an end to historic uncertainty between Nevada and California over distribution of the river’s water, allocating 90 percent to Nevada. Beyond enhanced drought storage for the Truckee Meadows community, it modifies the operation of federal and selected



non-federal reservoirs in the river system to protect and improve water quality and enhances conditions for the endangered Pyramid Lake cui-ui and the threatened Lahontan cutthroat trout. TROA also makes possible by retaining more water in upstream reservoirs, enhanced recreational opportunities including boating and fishing.

TROA replaces a rigid and inflexible water management system for the Truckee, dictated by decades-old court decrees that were designed to serve farmers, small hydroelectric plants and now defunct paper mills at a time when the Truckee Meadows has become more urbanized. It provides more efficient use of available reservoir storage and times the releases of water to meet modern-day demands including the municipal needs of Reno-Sparks.

“This is a big change from the way things have been done for a very long time,” said Federal Water Master Chad Blanchard, who is charged by the federal courts with the task of operating the Truckee River reservoir system.

“While continuing to protect existing water rights under the original 1944 Orr Ditch Decree, the water master now assumes responsibility for the administration of TROA,” Blanchard said. “Through significant collaborative efforts with the signatory parties, the water master’s office is technically and operationally ready for the new responsibilities introduced by TROA.”

For TMWA, perhaps the biggest change will be greater ability to choose when water is stored in reservoirs and when it is released for its downstream use. “It brings real flexibility to the system,” said Mark Foree, TMWA general manager. “This is long overdue and will be a real plus for our entire area.”

U.S. Senator Harry Reid of Nevada, who has stewarded TROA and the related 1989 Negotiated River Settlement since his early years in office, described this milestone as critical for the future of Northern Nevada, particularly in the face of extended droughts and a changing climate. “The process has been anything but easy,” Reid acknowledged. “It’s taken a long time because it is so complicated. It’s been a marathon,” Reid concluded.

Truckee Meadows Water Authority (TMWA) is a not-for-profit water utility, overseen by elected officials from Reno, Sparks and Washoe County. TMWA employs a highly skilled team who ensure the treatment, delivery and availability of high-quality drinking water around the clock for more than 385,000 residents of the Truckee Meadows.