

Mayor Callegari Says Cloud Seeding Cause of Lower Lake Levels

Oct. 12, 2010 — Susanville, California, Mayor Lino Callegari said he is concerned the practice of cloud seeding in the Shasta and Lake Almanor regions of the state may be part of the reason why Eagle Lake has such low water levels.

Callegari brought his concern before the rest of the Susanville city council as the last discussion item at its Oct. 6 meeting. "Eagle Lake, the Thule Lake Basin, Pyramid Lake, they're not getting the precipitation they used to get," Callegari said. "It's all being dropped on the other side of the mountain. If you go to Shasta, Shasta Lake is completely full, and so is Lake Almanor."

The basic definition of cloud seeding as it was discussed at the meeting is the process of adding specific chemicals into the upper part of clouds to stimulate rain.

Callegari said he wanted to get some support in getting more involved with the cloud seeding issue. He said he believed that because of the process, rain was dropping before clouds were able to make it over the western slope of the Sierra mountain range separating the regions. He said his chief concern was the loss of Eagle Lake because of the lack of rain.

Callegari asked Interim City Administrator and City Attorney Peter Talia to draft a letter to Assemblyman Dan Logue to see if there was anything that could be done as far as state support.

Callegari also mentioned the seeding was being carried out by Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E).

"I don't want to be crying wolf," Callegari said. It's all under PG&E, and PG&E did not have to do an Environmental Impact Report."

Talia then asked local rancher Jay Dow to give some information about how cloud seeding had been affecting the area for some time and the impact it was having on the local environment.

"PG&E has the largest cloud seeding operation in the state in the Lake Almanor Basin," Dow said. "They used to have this on their Web site. But because they are being scrutinized somewhat now, it's no longer there."

He said more recently, PG&E had started a program in Siskiyou County, which he said has met with a lot of opposition, stemming primarily from pollution concerns of the chemicals coming down from the seeding process, as well as the loss of water. He said none of this is a recent occurrence either, because PG&E has been cloud seeding in the Lake Almanor Basin since the 1950's.

For more information, Dow invited the council to come and meet with his Susan River watershed group at the local Bureau of Land Management Office on Riverside Drive at 2 p.m. on Nov. 1. Dow said there would be representatives from PG&E to come and talk about its cloud seeding program.

"It is a concern of ours," Dow said. "I'm in the agriculture industry, and the snow pack is important to me. Eagle Lake's important to me. Willow Creek and Susan River are part of my irrigation rights for my property, so it is a big deal. You're right to be looking at this."