



**MEMORANDUM
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**
County of Placer

TO: Honorable Board of Supervisors **DATE:** May 12, 2026
FROM: Daniel Chatigny, County Executive Officer
BY: Ann Hutchinson, Board Support Services Manager
SUBJECT: Resolution Honoring the Lives Lost in the Castle Peak Avalanche and Recognizing and Commending Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team

ACTION REQUESTED

1. Adopt a Resolution honoring the lives lost in the Castle Peak avalanche and recognizing and honoring the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue team for their exceptional service, bravery, and compassion during the response.
2. Authorize the Chair to sign a letter to the Governor recommending the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue team for state-level recognition of their extraordinary service during the Castle Peak avalanche response.

BACKGROUND

On February 17, 2026, a massive avalanche occurred near Castle Peak in neighboring Nevada County, resulting in the loss of multiple lives and deeply impacting North Lake Tahoe, Truckee and the broader regional community. The avalanche killed nine people, making it the deadliest in California history. Six others survived. The victims were members of a close-knit mountain community, with some residing in the Tahoe region and others traveling from the Bay Area.

Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue (TNSAR), is a highly trained, all-volunteer organization specializing in backcountry and winter rescue in the greater North Lake Tahoe and Truckee region. TNSAR played a critical role in supporting the overall recovery efforts. The conditions faced by responders included dangerous avalanche terrain, severe weather, and physically demanding backcountry travel. The members of TNSAR demonstrated extraordinary dedication, compassion, and resilience in the face of tragedy, embodying the highest ideals of public service and volunteerism.

The Placer County Board of Supervisors (Board) honors the lives lost in the Castle Peak avalanche and extends its deepest condolences to all those impacted. The Board recognizes and commends TNSAR for their exceptional service, bravery, and compassion during the response. The recommended letter requests that Governor Newsom Board extend state-level recognition to TNSAR for their extraordinary service during the Castle Peak avalanche response.

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FISCAL IMPACT

There is no fiscal impact as a result of this action.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A – Resolution

Attachment B – Letter to Governor Newsom

ATTACHMENT A

**Before the Board of Supervisors
County of Placer, State of California**

In the matter of: A RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIVES LOST IN THE CASTLE PEAK AVALANCHE AND RECOGNIZING AND COMMENDING THE TAHOE NORDIC SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM FOR THEIR EXCEPTIONAL SERVICE, BRAVERY, AND COMPASSION DURING THE RESPONSE.

Resolution No.: _____

The following Resolution was duly passed by the Board of Supervisors of the County of Placer at a regular meeting held _____, by the following vote:

Ayes:

Noes:

Absent:

Signed and approved by me after its passage.

Chair, Board of Supervisors

Attest:

Clerk of said Board

WHEREAS, Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue (TNSAR), founded in 1976 by Doug Read and Larry Sevison, is a highly trained, all-volunteer organization specializing in backcountry and winter rescue in the greater North Lake Tahoe and Truckee region, and has served the region for nearly five decades; and

WHEREAS, on February 17, 2026, a tragic avalanche occurred near Castle Peak in neighboring Nevada County, resulting in the loss of multiple lives and deeply impacting the North Lake Tahoe, Truckee, and broader regional community; and

WHEREAS, TNSAR played a critical role in supporting the overall recovery effort, working in close coordination with the Nevada County Sheriff's Office and the Placer County Sheriff's Office to recover survivors and locate victims to bring closure to their families; and

WHEREAS, TNSAR responded swiftly and professionally, contributing to the operation 24 volunteers, approximately 48 operational hours, and a total of 646 volunteer hours all while enduring challenging and hazardous winter conditions; and

WHEREAS, the conditions faced by responders included dangerous avalanche terrain, severe weather, and physically demanding backcountry travel, requiring advanced training, coordination, and unwavering commitment, and were at times life-threatening to the volunteers; and

WHEREAS, the victims of this tragic event were members of a close-knit mountain community, with some residing in the Tahoe region and others traveling from the Bay Area; and

WHEREAS, many of the volunteers involved in the response were members of the same community as the victims and, in some cases, shared personal connections with those who were lost, making their service all the more courageous, selfless, and emotionally difficult; and

WHEREAS, the members of TNSAR demonstrated extraordinary dedication, compassion, and resilience in the face of tragedy, embodying the highest ideals of public service and volunteerism; and

WHEREAS, their efforts not only supported a complex and sensitive recovery operation, but also ensured dignity for the victims and provided comfort to grieving families and the broader community.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Placer County Board of Supervisors honors the lives lost in the Castle Peak avalanche, extends its deepest condolences to all those impacted, and recognizes and commends the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue team for their exceptional service, bravery, and compassion during the response.

County of Placer Board of Supervisors

175 Fulweiler Avenue
Auburn, California 95603
(530) 889-4010
BoardClerk@placer.ca.gov

BONNIE GORE
District 1
SHANTI LANDON
District 2
ANTHONY M. DEMATTEI
District 3
SUZANNE JONES
District 4
CINDY GUSTAFSON
District 5



May 12, 2026

Governor Gavin Newsom
1021 O Street, Suite 9000
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Commendation for the Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue Team

Dear Governor Newsom:

On behalf of the Placer County Board of Supervisors, I am writing to formally request and nominate the volunteer members of Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue for state-level recognition following their extraordinary work in response to the recent Castle Peak avalanche in the North Tahoe region.

During this emergency, the team mobilized immediately in hazardous, white-out conditions. Their work required advanced avalanche training, technical backcountry expertise, interagency coordination, and sustained physical and emotional endurance in an unforgiving environment. As a result of their swift and coordinated response, all nine victims were located.

Every individual involved serves as a volunteer. They dedicate hundreds of hours annually to training and preparedness, knowing that when disaster strikes in the Sierra Nevada, they will be the ones called upon. When this avalanche occurred, they answered without hesitation, carrying out their duties with professionalism and resolve, even as some members had personal relationships with some of the victims. Their ability to remain focused and steadfast under such difficult circumstances speaks to both their character and their commitment to service.

The Board of Supervisors respectfully requests your consideration of an appropriate state commendation recognizing the bravery, skill, and selfless service demonstrated by Tahoe Nordic Search and Rescue. Thank you for your continued support of California's emergency responders and volunteers.

Sincerely,

Shanti Landon
Supervisor District 2, Chair 2026

