

THAT SUMMER FEELING

99¢ Per Month

Subscribe
([http://offers.rgj.com/specialoffer?](http://offers.rgj.com/specialoffer?gps-source=BENBjun&utm_medium=nanobarap&utm_source=bounce-exchange&utm_campaign=SUMMER18)
gps-
source=BENBjun&utm_medium=nanobarap&utm_source=bounce-
exchange&utm_campaign=SUMMER18)



Why are cumulative impacts of development ignored?: Hemlein

Kris Hemlein Published 12:42 p.m. PT June 15, 2018



(Photo: Provided by Kris Hemlein)

The word “cumulative” means increasing or enlarging by successive accumulation or increasing by addition. In the extractive industries (oil, gas and mining) the term “cumulative impacts” is used to define the parameters by which an industry is allowed to operate, then mitigate after closure. In industry or residential environments, cumulative environmental impacts can be defined as effects on the environment which are caused by the combined results of past, current and future activities.

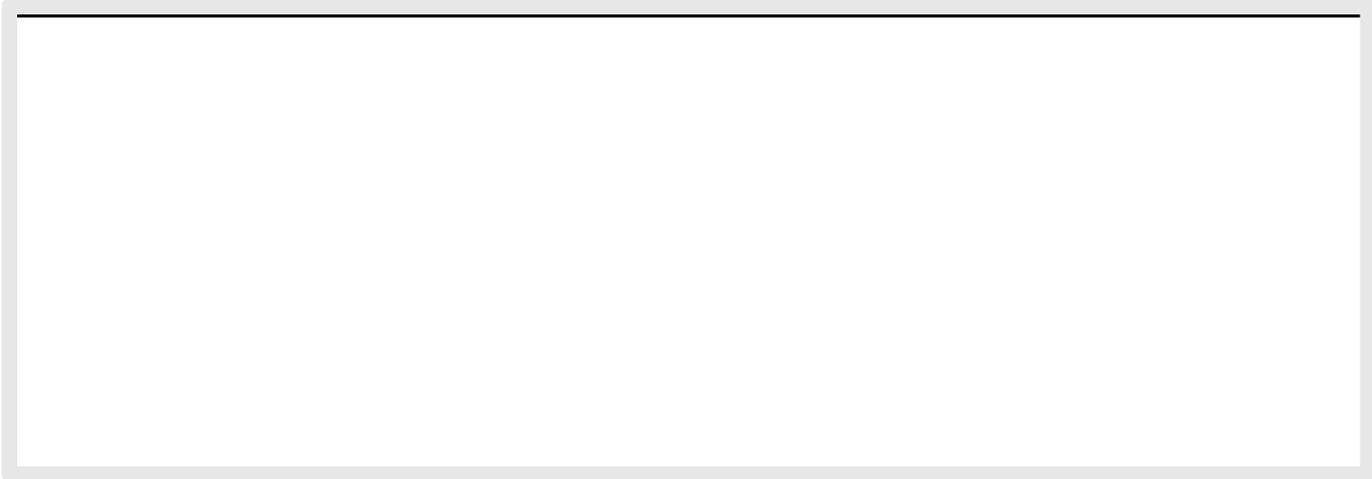
More: [North Valleys residents aren't anti-growth, but they have some real issues: King \(/story/opinion/voices/2018/06/12/north-valleys-residents-arent-anti-growth-but-issues-remain-king/696308002/\)](/story/opinion/voices/2018/06/12/north-valleys-residents-arent-anti-growth-but-issues-remain-king/696308002/)

More: [Final Nevada primary election results from governor to local races in Reno \(/story/news/politics/2018/06/12/nevada-primary-election-results/692278002/\)](/story/news/politics/2018/06/12/nevada-primary-election-results/692278002/)

More: [How to submit an opinion column or letter to the editor \(/story/opinion/voices/2017/09/28/how-submit-opinion-column-letter-editor/715070001/\)](/story/opinion/voices/2017/09/28/how-submit-opinion-column-letter-editor/715070001/)

Human activities, with time, combine to collectively impact the environment. These effects may differ from the original, individual activities. For example, ecosystems can be damaged by the combined effects of human activities, such as air, land and/or water pollution; improper handling of industrial waste; and other human development activities.

ADVERTISEMENT



As citizens of Washoe County, what impacts to your surrounding environment have increased in the last five to 10 years? Is it traffic? Congestion? Higher taxes? Water supply? Concerns about increasing population and the county’s ability to provide adequate infrastructure? The county is taxing existing residents to pay for yet unplanned infrastructure, NOT demanding more from developers.

6/23/2018

Why are cumulative impacts of development ignored?: Hemlein

Scientific and technical experts in cumulative impacts analysis explore and quantify the manifold impacts of urbanization on ecosystems and the services they provide. These experts investigate the effects of urbanization on climate, soils, farming, ecosystems, stormwater and water supply. Ongoing research into cumulative impacts of urbanization on the environment, and natural resources needed to sustain them, now inform planning decisions made in urbanizing areas.

Washoe County is one of the most rapidly urbanizing areas in the country. Do our county planners, planning commissioners and Washoe County commissioners adequately consider cumulative impacts of urbanization on our existing residents? When you look at the infrastructure around you, do you feel secure that our county government is considering additional population and their demands when approving one development after another? Do the urban planners who work for Washoe County as well as the developers deal with cumulative impacts? Evidence of consideration of cumulative impacts in developers' tentative plans is lacking.

County and state governments must be responsible for gauging the long-term accumulation of the impacts of urbanization on the environment. If they are not, then who is?

Think about growth issues such as roads, traffic, water supply, schools, stormwater management (or mismanagement, given the 2017 flooding), sewage treatment, fire prevention and police services. With Washoe population currently at over 460,000 and expected to increase by another 200,000 in the next 10 years, it is imperative that robust consideration of cumulative impacts to these issues, along with adequate remedial measures, be implemented immediately if we are to protect our lifestyle and our natural resources.

Kris Hemlein is an environmental engineer specializing in mining environmental management and mine remediation services.

Read or Share this story: <https://www.rgj.com/story/opinion/voices/2018/06/15/why-cumulative-impacts-development-ignored-hemlein/706333002/>