



## **Settlement: Old toxic phone cables coming out of Lake Tahoe**

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RENO, Nev. (AP) — AT&T's Pac Bell subsidiary has settled a lawsuit conservationists filed under a U.S. law more typically cited in Superfund cases, agreeing to spend up to \$1.5 million to remove 8 miles (12.9 kilometers) of toxic telephone cables that were abandoned on the bottom of Lake Tahoe decades ago.

A U.S. judge in Sacramento recently signed the consent decree in the suit the California Sportfishing Protection Alliance filed in January.

The abandoned cables — replaced with modern fiber optic ones in the 1980s — contain more than 65 tons (59 metric tonnes) of toxic lead that is polluting the alpine lake on the California-Nevada line, the lawsuit said.

In addition to violating state water quality protections, the suit said the more than 3 pounds (1.3 kilograms) of lead per foot (30 centimeters) of cable constitutes solid waste regulated under the U.S. Resource Conservation and Recovery Act.

Pac Bell knew the cables they owned and operated contained lead that eventually would leak into the lake, the lawsuit said. Lead in both solid and dissolved forms is listed as known to cause cancer and reproductive toxicity, it said.

"All of the cables are damaged and discharging lead into Lake Tahoe," the lawsuit said.

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