

October 27, 2008

Mr, Rich Krumholz, Director  
Caltrans District 5  
50 Higuera Street  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401

Dear Mr. Krumholz

At its October 16, 2008 meeting, the thirteen members of the SBCAG board voted unanimously to reaffirm their support for the Caltrans Cold Spring Bridge Suicide Barrier project. The board adopted this position after holding a public hearing and listening to testimony of more than 25 members of the public and representatives of community organizations. Those testifying, including Santa Barbara County Sheriff Bill Brown, were overwhelmingly in support of the barrier project.

The Cold Spring Bridge is an important resource and is treasured by residents and visitors of Santa Barbara County. It is one of the most beautiful bridges in the state highway system and provides travelers with unparalleled scenic views of the unspoiled lands of the Santa Ynez Valley and Los Padres National Forest.

Unfortunately, the bridge is also a site where 46 people have taken their lives since it was constructed in 1963. The Cold Spring Bridge has become a magnet for suicides. There are unquestionably impacts associated with the construction of the barrier that are of concern to many in our community. There is strong evidence, however, that the barrier would serve as an effective deterrent to suicides at the bridge. SBCAG is deeply concerned about the loss of life and the risks posed to emergency personnel including those responding to suicide calls and those involved in recovery operations following a suicide. We urge Caltrans to move forward quickly with the barrier project to prevent further tragedies at the Cold Spring Bridge.

Please contact me or the Jim Kemp, SBCAG's Executive Director if you have any questions on this matter.

Sincerely,



Brooks Firestone, Chair  
SBCAG

cc: Will Kempton, Director, California Department of Transportation  
John Barna, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission