

February 12th, 2010

Ms. Bimla Rhinehart
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Room 2221 (MS-52)
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: 2010 Regional Transportation Improvement Program for Santa Barbara County

Dear Ms. Rhinehart:

On January 21, 2010 the Board of Directors of the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments (SBCAG) adopted the enclosed Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) for inclusion in the 2010 STIP. The RTIP is consistent with the Commission's guidelines for the 2010 STIP adopted October 14, 2009, including the need to reprogram nearly 40% of our currently programmed projects to 2013-14 and 2014-15.

SBCAG has focused its 2010 RTIP programming proposal on rescheduling projects carried forward from the 2008 STIP. The region is committed to delivering currently programmed projects of regional significance to minimize delays and the cost increases associated with those delays; however we understand the current fiscal constraints of the program and will continue to deliver our projects within programming limitations.

In November 2008, Santa Barbara County voters overwhelmingly approved Measure A, a transportation sales tax measure which will generate over \$1.0 billion in revenues over thirty years. The measure provides over \$210 million specifically for highway improvement projects, including \$140 million alone to widen Highway 101 to 6 lanes between the cities of Santa Barbara and Carpinteria in south Santa Barbara County. Part of our success in getting Measure A passed can be attributed to a commitment by SBCAG, local elected officials, and Caltrans that widening this four-lane, 10-mile segment of Highway 101 to 6 lanes will be the top priority project and will be pursued on an expedited schedule. Highway 101 is one of only two north-south highways that connect the Los Angeles basin and the greater San Francisco Bay Area. When Interstate 5 is closed because of accidents, fires, snow, or other inclement weather, all north-south traffic in California is diverted to the 101 freeway. It is the primary artery along the Central Coast and is vital to statewide commerce; this is reflected in its designation as a state Focus Route and High Emphasis Route. The corridor is a principal arterial on the National Highway System. It serves as a Strategic Highway Network Route, as well as a State Highway Extra Legal Load Route and is part of the National Truck Network. The corridor provides access from California's Central Coast agricultural operations to markets around the country. With no alternate highway routes for commuter traffic to and from Ventura County and only one alternate route for interregional traffic, Highway 101 experiences 2-4 hours of near gridlock each day impacting the economic vitality of the State and quality of life of the region. The hours of delay are projected to increase to 10 per day by 2040. A widening of the highway to 6 lanes is required to relieve current and projected congestion.

Member Agencies

Buellton ■ Carpinteria ■ Goleta ■ Guadalupe ■ Lompoc ■ Santa Barbara ■ Santa Maria ■ Solvang ■ Santa Barbara County

Consequently, the RTIP includes a request that the CTC, beginning as soon as 2012, commit \$200 million in Interregional Improvement Program funding to Highway 101 improvements in Santa Barbara County. SBCAG understands that these funds are available on a statewide basis and requests for these funds are numerous, but SBCAG believes that this request is justified given the importance and magnitude of the widening project.

SBCAG recognizes that it is important to continually communicate this message to the CTC to emphasize that Highway 101 in Santa Barbara County is a top priority so that in 2012 the CTC can be prepared to partner with SBCAG and begin programming some of the \$200 million in Interregional STIP and other available state funds to Highway 101 to match SBCAG's Regional STIP and transportation sales tax funds. It is likely that in the current economic climate SBCAG's expectations for Interregional STIP will need to be fulfilled over several STIP cycles.

In addition, SBCAG continues to support the \$18.3 million currently programmed in IIP funding for rail track improvements in Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Since the entire rail corridor from Ventura to San Luis Obispo is single track, improving passenger rail service and implementing commuter service in the Highway 101 corridor, to provide an alternative to driving, will require the construction of new rail sidings to improve service reliability and on-time performance of Amtrak and UPRR freight service.

Thank you for your attention to our RTIP. We look forward to working with you and your staff to answer any question the commissioners might have about our RTIP or projects. Should you have any questions about the RTIP, please feel free to contact Steve VanDenburgh or Brittany Odermann of my staff, at (805) 961-8900.

Sincerely,



Jim Kemp
Executive Director

cc: Rich Krumholz, Caltrans D5

Enclosure

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