



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **CALTRANS CELEBRATES COMPLETION OF NEW CARPOOL LANES ON U.S. 101** *High-Occupancy Lanes First of Their Kind in Area*

**CARPINTERIA** – Caltrans, the Ventura County Transportation Commission and the Santa Barbara County Association of Governments held a ribbon-cutting ceremony today for a \$102 million project that added 12 miles of new carpool lanes on U.S. Highway 101.

“Caltrans is committed to a 21<sup>st</sup> century transportation system that encourages sustainability, reduced emissions and more travel choices,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty. “The addition of these carpool lanes is a bold step toward realizing these goals.”

One carpool lane in each direction has been constructed along a six-mile stretch of the freeway between Mobil Pier Road in Ventura County and Casitas Pass Road in Santa Barbara County. The project also constructed a new pedestrian undercrossing in La Conchita, added concrete barriers and closed existing median openings. Additional improvements include a dedicated bike path, median landscaping, improved drainage and smart technology devices to better regulate traffic.

“Caltrans is very pleased to introduce the first carpool lane to Ventura and Santa Barbara counties,” said Caltrans District 7 Director Carrie Bowen. “Now motorists will receive considerable benefits, including reduced traffic congestion, fuel costs, improved air quality and enhanced safety. It’s a win-win for the public.”

The project received \$81 million in funding from Proposition 1B, the 2006 voter-approved transportation bond. In total, approximately \$18 billion in Proposition 1B funds have been distributed statewide to improve transportation.

“This joint project is a milestone for connectivity between Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. Not only do we have a new class 1 bike lane, but we also have the first carpool lanes on California’s central coast,” said Ventura County Executive Director Darren Kettle. “This means better traffic flow along US 101 as well as improved safety for bicyclists.”

The High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or carpool lane system is used as a cost-effective strategy by agencies like Caltrans to maximize the people-carrying capacity on freeways. They incentivize new travel and mobility options such as carpooling or riding transit and play a significant role in the management of congestion on state freeways. Additional benefits include travel time savings and





# NEWS RELEASE

trip reliability for lane users, increased current and future mobility for transportation corridors and reduced air emissions due to decreased congestion.

Santa Barbara County Supervisor Salud Carbajal said, "Completion of this section of the 101 HOV Widening Project on time and on budget is a fantastic achievement. Now that the first two of four phases of the 101 Widening are finished, we are 45% of the way to finishing the entire project. The new carpool lanes will make it faster for commuters to get to work, reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality. SBCAG is working hard to get construction started on the next phase of the 101 Widening Project in Carpinteria as soon as possible. The 101 HOV Widening project is Santa Barbara County's highest regional transportation priority and is critical to improving the local economy and protecting the region's quality of life."

Climate change poses an immediate and growing threat to California's economy, environment and infrastructure. To prepare for climate change and adapt to its effect, Caltrans is focused on preserving our state's existing transportation infrastructure while continually innovating to find better solutions. Caltrans is currently hosting statewide workshops to help shape California's transportation future, including achieving a statewide reduction in greenhouse gas emissions 80 percent below 1990 levels by 2050. Caltrans is also cutting emissions by expanding active transportation and embracing new technology in construction materials, alternative fuels, efficient lighting and renewable energy. These efforts have reduced emissions by more than 161,500 tons annually, the equivalent of removing 31,000 passenger cars from California's roads. For more information on Caltrans' efforts to fight climate change, visit:

[http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/climate\\_change/documents/Caltrans\\_ClimateChangeRprt-Final\\_April\\_2013.pdf](http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/offices/orip/climate_change/documents/Caltrans_ClimateChangeRprt-Final_April_2013.pdf).

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