85 J. A. Faerigan

85-1 Alternative C1T, particularly its north segment, does not meet criteria for LEDPA because of its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to listed fish species. General Response 1.3 explains why Modified Alternative J1T is the LEDPA/preferred alternative. See also FEIS/EIR, Chapter 2.

J.A.FAERIGAN
745 RIDGEMONT WAY
ARROYO GRANDE,CA.,93420
Tel: (805) 481-2665

July 22,2002

Office of Environmental Management,
Caltrans District 3,
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive,
Sacramento, Ca.,95833

Att: Nancy Mackenzie

Re: Willits Bypass Project

Dear Ms. Mackenzie,

As owners of A.P. 007-250-10, lying southwest of Willits adjacent to U.S. Hwy. 101, we are writing to urge your offices to make a final decision on the alignment of the proposed Willits Bypass Project. We have owned this property since 1968 and there have been ongoing discussions and studies of this project for all of the ensuing years. I would venture an educated guess that the amount of money wasted by Caltrans on studies would have easily paid for the construction of the improvements. The time for discussion has run out – let's see a decision!!

As a retired civil engineer having extensive experience in the design and construction of roadways varying from residential subdivisions to state highway projects, I feel I am reasonably well qualified to evaluate the proposed alignments for this project.

85-1 It appears that a combination of Alt. J1 and Alt. C1 would present a viable alignment through the subject area. This appears to be the most economical alignment and would eliminate the necessity of constructing overpasses to accommodate the existing railroad track. Any alignment that lies parallel with and east of the railroad track appears to be the best choice.

Thank You,

J.A. Faerigan

86 Kathleen Ferri-Taylor

86-1 Visual and noise studies concluded that the impacts are not significant and unavoidable. See Sections 5.10 and 5.11 (DEIS/EIR).

86-2 See General Response 1.10 regarding a two-lane bypass, which does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

Maintenance and repair of state highways comes from a different source of funding than the construction of the bypass or any new facility. Maintenance funding for all State facilities is secured and funded on a regular cycle and cannot be diverted to fund new highway construction.

86-3 See responses to Comments 34-43 and 34-45 through 34-48 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

86-4 See General Response 1.9 regarding a center valley interchange. (Note that Alternative E3, which intersected S.R. 20 and thus included an S.R. 20 interchange, does not meet criteria for LEDPA.)

August 4, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Maiser Khaled, Chief
District Operations - North
Federal Highway Administration
980 9th Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Daniels and Mr. Khaled:

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Willits Bypass, and I have the following comments.

86-1 I am aware that the Willits Bypass will create a great deal of noise. This concerns me since I have chosen to live here partially because of the quiet, peaceful environment. Noise is not listed as an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" on the EIR report and it definitely should be. The beauty of our area is another reason I have chosen to live here. While I am pleased that Caltrans is making an effort to reduce the visual impacts of the bypass, it is impossible to hide such an enormous facility. Visual impact is not listed as "Unavoidable Significant Impact" on the EIR and it should be.

86-2 I do not believe that a four-lane bypass is needed. If we must have a bypass, I feel strongly that a two-lane bypass is all that is needed. A two-lane bypass would significantly reduce noise by lowering vehicle speed as well as significantly reduce the visual impacts this construction would have on our town. The environmental impact of the bypass would be cut in half as well. A two-lane bypass would cost a lot less also. I am concerned that all the allotted money for our highways would go towards a four-lane bypass leaving us nothing for road maintenance & repair costs. I would rather have two-lanes and money left for maintenance & repairs.

86-3 I am very concerned about the financial impact for the businesses in our community as well. Unfortunately, the people making the decisions about what kind of bypass to put here, don't actually live here. In addition, they won't be living with the consequences of these decisions either. Willits is a small town that depends largely on tourism for it's economic well-being. I am concerned that many businesses will suffer greatly or close due to the bypass. "Unavoidable Significant Impact" is not listed on the EIR report and it should be.

86-4 With interchanges only on either end of the town, I am concerned about public safety. In the event of an accident in the center of the bypass, the emergency vehicles would have to waste precious time by going to one end of town or the other to get to the interchange. A mid-bypass interchange with Highway 20 would aid with emergency vehicle access and alleviate traffic congestion in Willits.

Thank you for your consideration of this very important matter in decisions that will greatly affect many people for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Ferri-Taylor

Kathleen Ferri-Taylor
3259 Primrose Drive
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 459-3704

87 John and Gerry Figg-Hoblyn

87-1 An undercrossing (the freeway will cross over the local road) will be constructed at East Hill Road, and the floodway viaduct will cross over Center Valley Road, Hearst-Willits Road, and Sewer Plant Road. These grade separations do not allow traffic to enter or exit the freeway. See General Response 1.3 for a discussion of why the "Elsie" Truck Scales interchange (Alternative L/C) is not the preferred alternative, in part for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species. See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of why a center valley interchange is beyond the scope of this project.

08/24/2002

We know you're going to build it, you know you're going to build it, lets get going and get it done. Stop listening to a small group of whining so called environmentalists, most of who don't even live in the valley.(i.e. David and Ellen Drew)

87-1 We think the only intelligent thing to do is use the valley route along Bray road. Needed are a South exit, a North exit using the so named Elsie connection with an exit somewhere in the middle to connect with hiway 20. Also needed would be two over or under passes. One at East Hill road and one at Hearst-Willits Road about the location of Bray Road. These would handle the traffic coming into town from the valley areas. It's been almost 50 years, the time is now or never. I'm really sick of the traffic clogs, whining and arguing. Let's get it done. Thanks

John and Gerry Figg-Hoblyn
2051 Valley Road
Willits

88 John and Charline Ford

88-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. See General Response 1.3, which discusses why the hybrid Alternative L/C does not meet the criteria for LEDPA because of its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impact to local hydrology and to federally listed fish species.

Regarding item #6, avoidance is preferable to mitigating for direct impacts. But where avoidance is not feasible, mitigation is required. A biological conservation easement may be required for any of the build alternatives, and the size would be determined by the amount and degree of impact.

Regarding item #10, see General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

Regarding item #11, see General Response 1.9.

John and Charline Ford
2250 Hearst Road
Willits, CA 95490
August 8, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Ms. Daniels:

We have reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR for the Willits Bypass and we have the following comments:

We strongly recommend a four lane bypass along what is known as the ELSIE Route (LT South/CT North), with the northern interchange at the truck scales.

88-1 By looking at the positive aspects of the ELSIE Route, as listed below, it becomes more apparent that this is definitely a win-win situation for all parties concerned with the Willits Bypass. An adoption of the center route will accomplish the following:

1. Will show fiscal responsibility on behalf of Caltrans and the State of California ($122 million).

2. Will keep the number of individual properties affected to a minimum, by establishing the Bypass alignment along the now-existing railroad tracks and the current alignment of Highway 101.

3. Will not disrupt the hydrology that now functions in the Little Lake Valley.

4. Will require 700.000 cubic yards less fill than the proposed LT route.

5. Will reduce the noise level since the freeway will not be as highly elevated as the straight LT Route.

6. Will preserve 500- plus acres in a wildlife and wetlands conservation easement.

7. Will keep prime farm ground in the production of food and fiber.

8. Will not bisect the ranch properties in the northern end of Little Lake Valley.

9. Will keep the Bypass within a reasonable distance of the town of Willits.

10. Will allow for a future Brooktrails connection with the Bypass via Wild Oat Canyon.

11. Will allow for a future off-ramp in the center of town, via either Hearst Road or Center Valley Road.

In closing, we would like to offer our services and any information that we may have, that could benefit Caltrans in its selection and adoption of an economically and environmentally sound route for the Willits Bypass. Thanking you, we remain,

Sincerely,

John and Charline Ford

John and Charline Ford

89 Inez Fowler

89-1 Comment noted. Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR) explains in detail the purpose and need for a four-lane bypass. Section 2.5 (DEIS/EIR) explains the funding, which has been allocated for construction of the bypass and Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) describes the estimated construction schedule. There are many steps from funding to construction, which make the entire process quite lengthy. Section 2.4 (DEIS/EIR) describes the history of the Willits bypass project.

YES, YES, YES

Willits, California
June 25, 2002

In Regards to Mr. Richard Estabrooks Comments in the Willits News, 6-21-2002.
We need a by-pass around Willits very badly. Sitting in a stalled line of traffic is not fun. I hate it. I've lived here for years. I don't think people stop here and shop. Why should they? Some Bikers stop in Willits on their way to or from the Rally in the Redwoods but - - -
We do need more than one road in and out of Willits for safety.
Wake up and smell the Coffee!

89-1

Sincerely,
Inez Fowler
1475 Baechtel Rd. #F1
Willits, Ca. 95490

Trees? Yes!

P.S. I read in the Willits News a few years ago that the State had appropriated the money for the by-pass. So What happened?

90 Patricia Freeman

90-1 See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

90-2 The comment appears to refer to the lane reduction heading southbound on Oil Well Hill, where the northbound climbing lane begins. This area was originally within the project limits, but in early 2001 all the valley alternatives were truncated to reduce cost and environmental impacts and this area was eliminated from further study. See Section 2.4 DEIS/EIR History of the Willits Bypass.

90-3 The criteria of designing the roadway surface above the 100-year floodplain was established to ensure that the highway could remain open during severe flooding and to keep the structural section (the pavement and gravels below the pavement that support traffic loads) dry. This criterion would apply regardless of the number of lanes constructed. Also, like the four-lane facility, a two-lane facility would have to be constructed so as not to impact the 100-year floodplain. Caltrans analysis of a two-lane bypass concluded that it would not meet the purpose and need of the project, and therefore, it was not included as an alternative in the DEIS/EIR. See General Response 1.10. See General Response 1.6 regarding a Brooktrails Township second access. See response to Comment 34-7 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning) for a discussion of the northern portions of the truncated alternatives.

Freeman Realty

1468 South Main Street • Willits, California 95490
(707) 459-6750 • Fax (707) 459-6620

August 7, 2002

Dear Cher Daniels,

Enclosed is a recent article from the Willits News describing an accident just North of Willits at the two lane section there. People traveling South after a big event up North, were caught in an accident at that place where the four lane turns into a two lane road and goes over Outlet Creek.

90-1 While I favor a two lane road for a by-pass, I would like to see an interchange or something done further North than Quail Meadows because of the traffic at the connection of Sherwood Road and Hwy 101 and because the High School is right there also and creates heavy traffic at times. I know of one traffic death at the intersection of Sherwood Road and Hwy. 101, it was a schoolgirl.

90-2 Perhaps the interchange could also fix this sudden change from a four lane, going South, to a two lane. The four lane is going downhill at a steep pitch and speeding up is a natural thing.

90-3 Would a two lane by-pass have to be above the 100 year flood plain? I think you should study a two lane alternative with an Oat Canyon (future Brooktrails connection) interchange and a possible widening of the road North of the interchange to the four lane going up Oil Well hill.

Respectfully,

Patricia Freeman

Photo: by Roy Bagley

Emergency crews work on the victims of Monday's four-car pile up on Highway 101 near Reynolds Highway.

Four injured in chain collision

By Roy Bagley
Staff Writer

While a fairly calm Reggae on the River weekend was coming to a close Monday afternoon, southbound Highway 101 was mired in a five-mile long line of traffic. With the highway quickly condensing from two lanes to one, the danger of a traffic accident was growing.

Trying to alleviate congestion, Caltrans had put out signs warning motorists of the lane narrowing and the line of traffic. The California Highway Patrol had an officer on the scene as well.

Officer Mike Hosford from the Garberville CHP office was there to make sure everyone got through the tangle safely, driving down Oil Well Hill with his patrol car's lights on in an attempt to keep traffic under control. As he reached the bridge over Outlet Creek just south of Reynolds Highway, the line of cars and trucks came to a standstill.

Crumpled front ends and trunks mark the scene of Monday afternoon's chain-reaction crash that left four people with minor injuries.

Hosford brought his 2000 Ford cruiser to a stop. Right behind him was Lee Richardson, 48, of San Jose, driving a 1996 Saturn. Matthew Love, 23, of Point Reyes Station brought his 1994 Toyota pickup to a stop behind Richardson.

But Nateon Aiello, 21, of San Jose failed to see the stopped cars and rammed his 1988 Nissan pickup into the back of Love's vehicle, forcing the truck into the back of Richardson's car, which rearended Hosford's cruis-

See ACCIDENT, page 12

Willits News - 8-7-02

Freeman Realty

1468 South Main Street • Willits, California 95490
(707) 459-6750 • Fax (707) 459-6620

August 1, 2002

Dear Cher Daniels, Chief

90-4 This letter concerns the Willits Bypass. I would like to say that the noise issue has been completely swept under the rug. The noise is going to change the character of the valley.

90-5 Why wasn't the two lane bypass studied in the EIR? The two lane solution sounds like a winner to me. If, at the Northern end of the valley there will be a two lane section of freeway even after a four lane by-pass, why not two lanes all the way? Traffic studies indicate this solution would work into the far future. A good route, not disturbing the city's new wastewater area, and also connecting with a future Brooktrails road, could be the right answer here. Traffic could travel a little slower, noise would be reduced, and more inventive routes could be considered.

90-6 Cal Trans' proposal to have the interchange at Quail Meadows is a poor idea. This would impact the already ridiculous and heavily traveled connection of Sherwood Road and Main Street. People have died at this intersection.

90-7 Hal Wagenets' idea of changing the route of Willits Creek might be useful here. Certainly it would not be too expensive. Also having the Northern interchange further North would be a very good idea.

90-8 With all the work that has been done, it just doesn't seem right that you have not considered a two lane alternative. The level of service would be more than adequate, as I understand some of your own internal documents state. An independent traffic study by professionals also found that the level of service would be good for a long way in the future. Save the taxpayers some money. Even if you purchased the right of way for a four lane route, building the two lane would still save money. That, and the adequacy of level of service, the reduction of noise, the additional flexibility of route plan all say to me that we would be best served by a two lane by-pass. Please study this possibility.

Respectfully,

Patricia Freeman

cc; Maiser Khaled, Chief

90-4 Noise impacts have been identified and abatement has been studied following the process as outlined in the Traffic Noise Analysis Protocol. This process meets the requirements outlined in both the NEPA and CEQA guidelines. Caltrans/FHWA are confident in the adequacy of the DEIS/EIR as a document of disclosure and for providing the necessary information to make a decision on the project.

90-5 A two-lane facility was not considered in the DEIS/EIR because it would not meet the purpose and need for the project. See General Response 1.10 regarding a two-lane bypass.

90-6 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school and at the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations at Quail Meadows Interchange.

90-7 See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek Restoration.

90-8 A two-lane alternative would not reduce cost or impacts substantially in comparison to a four-lane facility, given design requirements including shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. Caltrans Traffic staff reviewed the independent traffic study (SHN, 10/28/99) referred to in the comment and concluded that the report did not justify a two-lane facility. See also response to Comment 90-5.

91 Beda Garman

This letter was signed also by Linda Hiott, Less Middleton, Joe Sutton, Sharon Jainan, and Gaye Orvis.

91-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction. General Response 1.3 discusses the reasons Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative.

91-2 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

***BUD GARMAN & SONS* CONSTRUCTION SERVICES**
389 North Main Street, Willits, California 95490
(707) 459-5859 (Fax) 459-8549
License #679517

August 19, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Willits Bypass

Attention: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Chief Daniels:

91-1 We would like to have the Elsie/Wild Oat Canyon proposal approved for the Willits Bypass project.

We own property at 389 N. Main Street, of which we have owned and operated a business from for over 35 years. We also own property at 24900 N. Highway 101.

91-2 We feel the best solution to the traffic problem for this community is the Elsie/Wild Oat Canyon proposal.

Yours truly,

Beda H. "Bud" Garman
Garman & Sons Construction Services

Linda Hiott 456-0310
Les Middleton
Joe Sutton 707 354 0327
Sharon Jainan 459-5766
Gaye Orvis

92 Janice Gendreau

92-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction. General Response 1.3 discusses the reasons that Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

92-2 Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR) explains in detail the purpose and need for a four-lane bypass. The proposed median width is 46 feet, not 60 feet. However, please note the existing median width directly south of the beginning of the proposed Willits Bypass is 60 feet wide. See General Response 1.13 regarding median width.

92-3 See General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration.

92-4 Noise abatement was considered in areas where traffic noise impacts would occur. Noise abatement is being considered in areas where it is *feasible and reasonable.* See response to Comment 9-73 (City of Willits).

92-5 See response to Comment 26-1 (California Oak Foundation).

Janice V. Gendreau
24876 Goose Place
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 459-1204 janicevivian@pacific.net

August 17, 2002

Cher Daniels
Office of Environmental Management
Caltrans District 3
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Willits Bypass Project

Dear Ms. Daniels,

92-1 I wish to express my support for the combined alternatives of L1 in the southern portion of the Willits Bypass proposals and C1T in the north, known as **Elsie**. This combination will serve our community best and provides a safer, less-congested interchange at the location north of the Truck Scales. The Quail Meadows interchange would be a disaster.

92-2 I support a 4-lane highway because it is safer but find a **60-foot median strip unacceptable**. Imposing this new median standard on the Willits Bypass will have unreasonable environmental impacts. Nowhere else on Highway 101 north or south of Willits is there a median this wide. 24-feet for a median should be sufficient to slow any deviant traffic that may veer from the highway, especially if there is a slope.

92-3 I support the **Willits Creek Restoration proposal**, an innovative and positive environmental mitigation not mentioned in the EIR but very doable with only 500-feet of restoration and of great benefit to the wetlands.

92-4 I would like to see **soundwalls** along those areas of the alignment where schools and houses are in close proximity to the highway such as areas in Little Lake Valley around East Hill Road.

92-5 Finally, I would like **every effort made to save any heritage oaks** in the valley.

92-6 I hope our community concerns will be addressed and encourage Caltrans to involve our community in the final planning for the alignment.

Sincerely,

Janice V Gendreau

Janice V. Gendreau

92-6 See Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) concerning public involvement since circulation of the DEIS/EIR. Caltrans and FHWA will continue coordinating with Willits throughout final design and construction of the project.

93 Norene Gilstrap

93-1 Parcels identified on the Williamson Act and Timberland Protection Map (Map 13, Volume 2, DEIS/EIR) are currently enrolled in the Williamson Act program. The California Land Conservation (Williamson) Act is the State's principal tool for the preservation of agricultural and open-space lands. The designation of prime and non-prime corresponds to their Land Use Capability Index and/or Storie Index rating. "Prime Farmland" is lands rated I and II in the Land Use Capability Index or 80 through 100 in the Storie Index. Currently, the parcels referred to in this letter (007-040-10, 007-040-09, and 007-040-08) are not enrolled in this program.

Dear Cher Daniels,
I received the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/ environmental Impact Report.
Volume 1 of 2.
It is obvious That a Tremendous amount of work went into this process of identifying possible bypass routes.
After reviewing the material, I have Two Concerns. first, I
93-1 Personally do not want to live by a Bypass, but secondly I would like to Know why my property does not have a designati as "prime Agriculture Preserve Parcels" as was assigned to m neighbor?
On page 13, map 13 (williamson Act and Timberland Protection Zone Parcels), you identify some parcels as Prime Agricultural Parcels." Non-Prime Agr -ulture Parcels, and Timber Protectione Zone". My properties, parcels number 007-040-10, 007-040-09, 007-040-08 have no such designation.
On your map, you have identified my neighbor's property as Prime Agricultural Preserve Parcel" yet my property, which is separated by fence from Theirs. has no designation. for year's my neighbors the Collies, now the Rutledge's have grew hay ran cattle, when my husband was alive, we did the same on our property.
we cultivated the Land, Sowed permanent pasture, grew hay and ran and raised cattle, At one Time prior to our purchasing the Property it was used to grow potatoes. Now we pasture Horses.
I do not see a difference between my property and my neighbors, yet Some one made this distinction. I would like That to be corrected
I look forward to your reply on this matter
Norene Gilstrap

94 Jerramy Gipson

To whom it may concern,

Having grown up in Willits, I have witnessed many summers where highway 101 has become completely clogged with traffic, turning a 10 minute drive (with stoplights) into a 45 minute crawl. For many years, I have heard that a bypass would someday be put in, and I always looked forward to that, because it would mean that our little town could be just that, a pleasant quiet small town, instead of a gridlock clogged mess of semi-trucks and motor homes. It really excites me that my dream of a bypass may someday soon come true.

94-1 I have read the proposals put forth by Caltrans and I feel that the L1T north Quail Meadows interchange is a supremely poor choice. This location is already often gridlocked with traffic from the highschool and Sherwood Road (the only road into Brooktrails, a community of thousands of people). To add an interchange here would quite simply create a most dangerous situation, and I strongly advise you to not do this. While this may be easier for Caltrans, it would spell disaster for our town not to mention the danger to our children who attend the town's only highschool.

94-2 I also feel that the railroad land by Sparetime Supply should not be used for the freeway. This would not accomplish the goal of moving highway traffic out of the city limits, and in fact would make things worse, since this area is residential. I firmly believe that if this were done, it would ruin Willits as a community, degrading property values, and posing a great danger to the children and families living there. The car exhaust from a freeway in that location would settle directly into the neighborhoods of Willits.

94-3 What Willits needs is for the bypass to be ***outside*** of city limits. The best solution for Willits is the ELSIE/WILD Oat Canyon and the Willits Creek Restoration bypass proposal. This bypass option takes the traffic out of town, thus cutting down on congestion, exhaust, and injury, making Willits a much safer and enjoyable place to live and helps the local fish as well. If an off ramp into the middle of town was provided as well, Willits businesses could benefit from tourist traffic. Also, if the ELSIE/WILD Oat Canyon bypass was two lanes in each direction instead of four, this would keep the environmental impact in the valley to a minimum and would most likely be quite large enough to accommodate traffic.

It may be that the ELSIE/WILD Oat Canyon bypass will take a little more work, but in the long run, it really is the best choice. Please do not let a very vocal **minority** ruin Willits' chance at becoming a truly pleasant community to live in. Overall this really is the ***only*** choice to help make Willits the kind of town it is striving to be for both its residents and businesses.

Yours truly,

Jerramy L. Gipson

94-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction. Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

94-2 It is not proposed to use Railroad right of way for the bypass near Sparetime Supply. The right of way for the byass will be easterly of the railroad right of way in this vicinity. Caltrans estimates the lanes of Modified Alternative J1T would be approximately 500 m (1600 feet) from Sparetime Supply, and 270 m (900 feet) from the neighborhood along San Francisco Avenue. The goal of the project does not include any specific requirement to move highway traffic out of the City Limits. However, proposed freeway bypass will be elevated and will be access controlled, meaning the only access to the freeway will be from the two interchanges. See Section 3.12, FEIS/EIR regarding Air Quality impacts.

94-3 General Response 1.3 discusses the reasons that Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative, including its potential to adversely impact local populations of federally listed fish species. See General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration. See General Response 1.9 regarding a center valley interchange. The proposed project proposes a four-lane facility with two lanes in each direction. If the comment letter intends to refer to a two-lane facility, see General Response 1.10, which explains why a two-lane facility does not meet the purpose and need of the project. See also response to Comment 47-6 (Carol Kuhling Barrett) regarding environmental impacts of a two-lane facility.

95 Eric Glassey, Leon Springer, and Gerald Jordan

95-1 Interior noise levels are generally 10 to 25 dB lower than exterior noise levels. For commercial areas, the Noise Abatement Criteria is Leq (h) 72 dBA (exterior); there is no interior noise criteria. Predicted exterior noise level is Leq (h) 71 dBA. Assuming a minimum reduction of 10 dB (typical construction with windows open facing the highway) the interior noise level would be Leq (h) 61dBA. Noise levels below Leq (h) 67 dBA are below the level of interference of speech communication.

DripWorks
Your Source for Drip and Micro Irrigation

8/7/02

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Ms Daniels:

Dripworks is a Mail Order business providing drip irrigation and pond liners to homeowners, farms, and landscapers throughout the United States and the Caribbean. As a Mail Order business we are on the telephone throughout the day taking orders and providing customer support and technical information.

95-1 We are located at the end of Sanhedrin Circle in Willits. Looking at the maps provided in the Environmental Atlas we estimate that the edge of the southbound lane will be 250' from our building. Our office faces the meadow where the freeway will be and we are very concerned about the noise levels generated in the construction and ongoing use of the roadway. It will make it difficult and at times impossible to talk with customers on the telephone. Without some sort of sound mitigation we will be dramatically affected by the nearby noise from the freeway. This will affect both our ongoing operations and also the value of our property and the salability of our business.

We are requesting a sound wall or high berm next to the freeway to cut the noise level down to a reasonable level. We would also request that any sound mitigation measures that are to be done in our immediate proximity be included in the final documents, merely saying that it will be studied at a later date is not acceptable.

Please call us if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Eric Glassey
Partner

Leon Springer
Partner

Gerald Jordan
Partner

EVERLINER

190 Sanhedrin Circle
Willits, CA 95490-8753

Orders & Catalogs: 800.522.3747 Phone: 707.459.6323
FAX: 707.459.9645 email: dripwrks@pacific.net
www.dripworksusa.com

96 Glen Green

96-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction. General Response 1.3 discusses the reasons that Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

Regarding a center valley interchange, see General Response 1.9.

08/01/02

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, Ca 95833

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Subject: The Willits Bypass

96-1 I am writing you to express my support for the ELSIE (alternate L in the south and alternate C in the north) with the truck scales interchange. This is the only alternate that makes sense for the community of Willits and future growth. We must move the interchange further north from the High School and Sherwood Road. It is also imperative we develop a second road in and out of Brooktrails for the obvious reasons: congestion, safety, evacuation and growth. And there needs to be a bypass/highway 20 connection to eliminate this traffic through town. Please listen to the community and all its agencies that support this alternative. Thank you.

1790 S. Main st
Willits CA 95490

97 Catherine Glyer

97-1 Comment noted. Caltrans traffic studies of existing conditions are the basis for the purpose and need for a proposed four-lane bypass. Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction. Alternatives E3 and C1T are the alternatives furthest from town. However, Alternative E3 does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria because of its overall environmental harm, including potentially adverse impacts to water quality and listed fish species, and Alternatives C1T and L/C do not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria because of their direct adverse impacts to wetlands and their potentially adverse impacts to listed fish species. See General Response 1.3.

97-2 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange. Mitigation measures are proposed to lessen aesthetic impacts of the proposed project.

97-3 General Response 1.3 discusses why Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of the Willits Bypass project.

97-4 Comment noted. Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR), purpose and need for project, explains in detail the need for a four-lane bypass of Willits on U.S. 101.

08/25/2002 12:04 PM

To: <nancy_mackenzie@dot.ca.gov>
cc:"Rosie Wagenet" <rosiewag@saber.ne
Subject: Willits Bypass

August 25, 2002
To: Cher Daniels
attn:Nancy Mackenzie
Office of Environ Mgmt
Caltrans Dist 3

Please accept my input on the Willits Bypass controversy.

97-1 **1. YES on the Bypass.** pref 4 lanes, east of Willits, as far away from town as possible.

97-2 **2. NO on Quail Meadows interchange.** Way too close to town. This would be an immense disaster, in terms of aesthetics, safety, and traffic.

97-3 **3. YES support the "Elsie" plan,** with the possible exceptions of 1.) moving northern ramp even further north, and the southern ramp further south; 2.) connect Hwy 20 to fwy via eastern extension.

97-4 Please bring relief to our community with the long overdue bypass. The Willits community is a habitat to protect as well as anywhere else. I personally feel the town would thrive, not perish, with the bypass. The environmental impact would be less than the devastating impact that the drive-through traffic already creates for our village. The noise, pollution, and congestion is unbearable.
It can only get worse without the bypass.

Thank you for listening,
Catherine Glyer
20741 Locust St
Willits, Ca 95490
tel# 707 459-6306
e-mail: glyers@pacific.net

98 Robin Goldner

The following individuals submitted the same form letter:

Goldner, Robin
Komer, Marc

98-1 Please refer to General Response 1.10 for discussion of a two lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need of the project. See also response to Comment 34-15 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

98-2 Vehicles leaving Brooktrails via Sherwood Road will save time traveling to the northern interchange to access the bypass southbound rather than traveling through downtown Willits to the southern interchange. Also, see General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access.

98-3 Native plantings of trees and shrubs will be provided for the project at major interchanges and other locations, which require a visual screen. See Section 5.10.4 (DEIS/EIR) for mitigation measures for visual resources. Landscaping is not proposed as mitigation for noise since vegetation is not effective noise abatement. Caltrans will investigate the use of pavement technologies that reduce noise.

98-4 See Chapter 2 (FEIS/EIR) for a description of Modified Alternative J1T (the preferred alternative) and Appendix I (FEIS/EIR) for layouts of the alternative.

ROBIN GOLDNER, MSW
Licensed Clinical Social Worker #15373
245 S. Humboldt St., Suite B • Willits, CA 95490 • (707)

July 9, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Att: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator
CALTRANS Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
Re: Willits Bypass EIR/EIS

Dear Ms. Daniels,

I am in favor of a Willits Bypass that minimizes the damage to community of Willits and the Little Lake Valley. I have made Willits my home for twenty years and live less than one mile from Highway 101. I will be affected by the changes that take place. I am very concerned about several issues:

98-1
- Two laner no brainer. I believe that two lanes with a 55-mph speed limit will suffice. Your traffic studies verify that there is no justification for building anything larger. There are amply opportunities for traffic to drive at the maximum allowable speed limit north and south of Willits. CALTRANS will be congratulated for its courage and vision for creating a Bypass that preserves land, adds quality to citizen's lives and saves money.

98-2
- Brooktrails intersection. There must be a Brooktrails interchange that routes traffic from the commuters living on Sherwood Road. If vehicles traveling south from Sherwood Road have to enter Highway 101 at the proposed southern interchange, Willits will continue to experience unacceptable amounts of traffic. From Willits' point of view, this will defeat the purpose of the bypass.

98-3
- Landscaping the Bypass. CALTRANS must plant trees and shrubbery along the Bypass to mitigate noise and visual pollution. I suggest native species that can naturalize to the environment.

98-4
- Small is Beutiful. The Bypass must be constructed to minimize its impact on Little Lake Valley. Be modest in your design. Keep intersections small. Restrict the total width of the Bypass to the bare legal limit. Utilize as little of our land as possible.

I am a taxpayer and I want you to spend my money wisely.

Respectfully,
Robin Goldner

99 James Gordon

99-1 The "ELSIE version" is a combination of Alternative L and Alternative C. General Response 1.3 discusses why Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative because of its overall environmental harm, including direct adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially adverse impacts to federally listed fish species.

James F. ("Jay") Gordon
P.O Box 249
Willits, CA 95490-0249

707-984-8969

August 6, 2002

Cher Daniels
Caltrans Chief of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr
Sacramento, CA 95833

Att. Nancy MacKenzie,
Environmental Coordinator

Re. Willits bypass

This is to express my support for the ELSIE version route (combo of L and E) for the proposed Willits Bypass, as recommended by Hal Wagenet.

99-1

This seems to be a practical plan that carefully considers the transportation needs of the area and our hope, as residents, of maintaining as much of the natural beauty of our region as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

100 Margaret and Richard Graham

3720 2nd Gate Road
Willits, California, 95490
August 1, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, California 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Ms. Daniels:

In studying the proposed Willits Bypass issue and the Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) we have major concerns. These issues have to do with many crucial impacts which are not addressed in the report.

100-1 First, there is no consideration of a two-lane bypass! Surely a study of such would prove that course to be far less costly in every aspect. The current J1T and LT proposals are far too massive in cost, size, years of construction congestion, destruction of a broad swath of human and natural habitat, noise, visual impact, very poor access to Willits, no connection to Hiway 20 or consideration of a Sherwood Road alternative outlet and a colossal waste of tax dollars. But the worst aspect of all is the traffic horrors which will occur at Sherwood Road and the High School if the Quail Meadows junction is pursued. That intersection cannot take any further load and in fact is already a major bottleneck.

100-2 We who live in Willits understand that most of the congestion on Hiway 101, our Main Street, is local traffic and the four-lane bypass will not alleviate our problems at all. Through traffic can be easily accommodated with a two-lane bypass.

100-3 We urge further study of the L-C combination for a 2-lane bypass, including constructing a channel to reconnect the valley waterways, avoiding a train overpass and connecting with the proposed Wild Oat Canyon outlet from Sherwood Road.

100-4 A new study needs to be done with these things in mind. The existing EIS/EIR is not worth the paper it is printed on. It does not identify, or when they are identified, does not come close to mitigating the many problems inherent with the proposed freeway concept. Please get real with this thing.

Sincerely,

Margaret S. Graham
Richard W. Graham

Margaret S. Graham &
Richard W. Graham

cc: Maiser Khaled

100-1 General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

The Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the LEDPA because it has the least overall environmental harm of the other alternatives. Modified Alternative J1T avoids the business park and the park/museum complex, and mitigation measures are proposed to reduce remaining environmental impacts (Appendix A, FEIS/EIR).

See General Response 1.6 regarding a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.8 regarding Quail Meadows Interchange.

100-2 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. Also, the City of Willits was awarded a Community Based Transportation Planning Grant (California Department of Transportation) to study alternative transportation corridors in the city limits that will help relieve local traffic congestion. The study (Baechtel Road/Railroad Avenue Corridor Community Design Study, 2003) will be used to obtain funding for planning and design of a preferred alternative. Again, a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project (General Response 1.10).

100-3 Caltrans and FHWA investigated Alternative L/C, and studies concluded that the hybrid alternative did not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria. See General Response 1.3, which discusses why Alternative L/C does not meet criteria for LEDPA, and therefore, is not eligible for construction. See General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

100-4 Caltrans is confident in the adequacy of the impact and significance conclusions presented in the technical studies and DEIS/EIR prepared for this project. Now that a Preferred Alternative (Modified J1T) has been identified and selected, the mitigation and monitoring plan will be finalized with project-specific details and mitigation ratios, in consultation with resource agencies.

101 Karen Gridley

101-1 See General Response 1.10 for discussion of why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project. Caltrans traffic studies of existing conditions are the basis for the purpose and need for a proposed four-lane bypass.

101-2 A viaduct is proposed for all of the valley alternatives to avoid floodway impacts. Alternative E3, which would be constructed in the hills west of Willits, does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria and therefore is not considered a viable alternative for construction.

See General Response 1.10 regarding a two-lane bypass.

101-3 Again, a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project (General Response 1.10). See General Response 1.9 regarding center valley interchange and General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

It's in the bag! ▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼▲▼
Karen Gridley • 900 Exley Lane • Willits, CA 95490 •
(707) 456-9225

August 5, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Envir. Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Envir. Coordinator

Maiser Khaled, Chief
District Operation-North
Federal Highway Administration
980 9th Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear CalTrans Representatives:

101-1 I used to be in support of a 4-lane by-pass for Willits, but I'm beginning to think that we-- i.e. CalTrans and the citizens of Willits-- need to look also at some variation to the standard four-lane concept: perhaps a 2- lane or even a 3 lane.

I realize that this would require more study and investigation by CalTrans, and that CalTrans may feel invested in the current proposed alternatives. But realize that we citizens of Willits have been exposed to 35+ years of study by various permutations of CalTrans, so we have grown patient and persevering in looking at this issue. The time already spent in studying this issue would be more acceptable if we can ultimately resolve many of the problems and conflicting needs.

101-2 First of all, probably the reason a freeway by-pass hasn't already been built yet is because it doesn't make a lot of sense to build a road through a lake, which is what is necessary for a reasonable by-pass of Willits. Seen in that light, it is apparent that the endeavor will be both environmentally disruptive (of habitat, farmland, and aesthetics), but also it will be quite costly. It only makes sense then, to consider the least costly and least disruptive alternatives-- which might be a 2-lane bypass-- before we go any further.

101-3 One suggestion I have heard recently was that a 4 lane connect with Highway 20, and that at that point the freeway would turn into a 2 lane bypass. The two lane would allow for one more exit for Willits, and one for Brooktrails. This type of solution would respond to the needs of Willits' residents and other local government organizations. I am hoping that CalTrans can respond to local concerns, in-put, knowledge and experience to develop less impactful alternatives.

101-4 The Willits Valley is a unique environment, both environmentally, socially and historically. Please do not ruin this for those born here in this special valley, and those who have come more recently in search of a quiet rural lifestyle with farm lands, beauty, fish and wildlife. If you will be making exceptions to a 4-lane freeway further to the north of Willits, please consider an alternative also for Willits.

101-5 I think the impacts of the 4-lane freeway that are most significant, and which are not adequately dealt with in the EIR (i.e.: no satisfactory mitigations) are as follows:

1) increased noise level from high speed vehicles on standard 4-lane
2) destruction of an esthetic rural landscape, including many stands of beautiful oak trees
3) irreversible loss of prime farm land
4) loss of wetland
5) physical division of our valley and its population into two sections
6) lack of interchanges (with the proposed alternatives) for either Route 20, downtown Willits(perhaps Commercial Street) and an acceptable exchange for the community of Brooktrails. This would lead to a loss of local business income. (The standard 4-lane interchanges take up too much space and cost too much to build.)

I sincerely hope that you as an agency will have the vision to go one more round to explore more viable, less disruptive alternatives.

Sincerely,

Karen Gridley

Karen Gridley, M.P.H.

101-4 See Section 2.2.2 (DEIS/EIR), which discusses the route concept for U.S. 101 from San Francisco to the Oregon border, as an ultimate four-lane freeway or expressway. Only two segments between Eureka and Crescent City have been revised to a lower concept due to cost and environmental concerns, including old-growth redwoods and state parks lands (Route Concept Report, Route 101 Corridor, October 2002). The two segments that were reduced in concept in the 1994 report from four-lane to existing two-lane are the Harry A. Merlo State Recreation Area (Humboldt County) and Del Norte Redwoods State Park (Del Norte County). Two additional segments were reduced in concept from four-lane to existing two-lane in the 2002 study due to environmental concerns and cost: Leggett to Red Mountain Creek (Mendocino County) and Richardson Grove State Park (Humboldt County).

101-5 Caltrans is confident in the adequacy of the impact conclusions presented in the technical studies and DEIS/EIR prepared for this project.

A center valley interchange is beyond the scope of the proposed project (General Response 1.9). Any of the valley alternatives would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road.

102 Pauline Grzanich

102-1 Comment noted. Caltrans traffic studies of existing conditions are the basis for the purpose and need for a proposed four-lane bypass.

102-2 Modified Alternative J1T, the Preferred Alternative, avoids the park complex, including the skate park referred to in the letter. The alternative came about due to local concerns about impacts to this community and regional resource. See General Response 1.3.

102-3 None of the proposed alternatives, including the Preferred Alternative would limit future expansion of the city's wastewater treatment plant. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

102-4 Caltrans and FHWA appreciate your comments on this project.

370 West Mendocino Ave.
Willits, CA. 95490

August 22, 2002

Dear CALTRANS,

As a resident of Willits for the past thirty-two years I would like to express my concerns.

102-1 First of all, I want a 4-lane by-pass. Growth is coming to the north state and we need to be ahead of the "eight-ball". It's taken CALTRANS nearly fifty years to revisit the Willits by-pass issue. I agree with the Willits City Council for a 4-lane bypass.

102-2 However, I do have concerns about the routes going through the valley. I would prefer the route further to the east side of the valley that doesn't go through the new soccer fields and or/ skate park that will be completed this spring '03. The children of the town have worked hard to raise money for the skate park to see it elimated two or three years later by the by-pass.

102-3 That same route I believe skirts the city water treatment plant limiting future expansion and with an exchange near Quail Meadows, which is to close to Willits High School. The exchange is too close to the Sherwood Road stoplight that carries lots of traffic to and from the Brooktrails sub-division. I prefer that an N/S exchange to done closer to the old truck stop area.

102-4 These are the concerns and comments from an average Willits resident. Thank you for taking the time to read my concers.

Sincerely yours,

Pauline C. Grzanich

Pauline C. Grzanich

103 Jane Gurko

103-1 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

103-2 See General Response 1.3 for reasons Alternative E3 is not longer being considered for construction.

Jane
<jbaner@pacific.net>
07/05/02 10:22 AM

To: nancy_mackenzie@dot.ca.gov
cc:
Subject: Willits Bypass

Dear Caltrans --

Many thanks for giving us the opportunity to respond to your latest four-options bypass plan. I have two burning opinions about the bypass:

103-1 1) ***Most important: Brooktrails desperately needs a second access road. The bypass is the obvious and best opportunity to provide that. I live up Sherwood road beyond Brooktrails, and I have seen the population quadruple in the last decade and the traffic become almost more than that small road can bear. ANY disaster, ANY emergency will turn into utter carnage in Brooktrails if there is no second way out. Could you live with this on your conscience, if you go ahead and build a bypass which ignores Brooktrails, and then such a disaster occurs? I hope not. PLEASE rethink this.

103-2 2) I do hope you drop the idea of building the bypass to the west of town. I hope this option was purely hypothetical, for the purpose of showing why east is better. It's bad enough to need a fourlane highway anywhere near town -- at least let's do it with the smallest land impact possible.

Thanks for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Jane Gurko, 28801 Timberline Rd.

104 Renee Haase-Thatcher

104-1 See General Response 1.10 which discusses a two-lane alternative and why it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

See General Response 1.3, which discusses development of Modified Alternative J1T (the preferred alternative). One of the benefits of this modified alternative is that it avoids the oak riparian woodland referred to in the letter.

It is not anticipated that "large box stores" would line the roadway, whether it is two lanes or four lanes, principally because a large portion of the bypass would be on viaduct and because there is no center valley interchange as part of this project. See also General Response 1.12 regarding growth at interchanges.

August 23, 2002

Ms. Cher Daniels, Chief
CalTrans Office of Env. Mgmt. S1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Re: Willits By-Pass

Dear Ms. Daniels:

104-1 Regrding the proposed four different Willits By-Pass routes; let me enter my vote for a two (2) lane version of "J" as it avoids the Last Oak Grove in Little Lake Valley, does not infringe on the wetlands, is closest to Willits, does not entail a re-routing of creeks etc. Whereas all the other proposals do one or more of the above and will really not do what is intended. The biggest back-up is always due to the bottle-neck of Sherwood Rd, leading into Brooktrails; past the High School there is no traffic jam anymore. And I stress the TWO LANE VERSION because I do not want to have this area start looking like Santa Rosa. The day after a four lane version is completed, the large BOX Stores will line the new roadway...no thank you!

Most of the people that I speak to up here feel pretty much the same way, I hope you will listen to us.

Thank you for your attention to this very important matter.

Sincerely,

Renee Haase-Thatcher

Renee Haase-Thatcher
2200 Baywood Way
Willits, CA 95490

cc: Mendocino County Supervisors
Mendocino County Planning Dept.

105 Lawrence and Susan Hammer

July 18, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Mr. Daniels:

My husband and I are concerned the Caltrans project known as the Willits Bypass be properly reviewed and carried out in the best interest of community, travelers, and ecology.

105-1 As presented to you by other concerned citizens, the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon plan provides endangered fish a bypass, enhances the new Willits Sewer Plant by providing increased flows, and improves the quality of wetlands in the central valley. This project is by far less expensive than the Caltrans Quail Meadows Interchange.

105-2 We ask you, our public servants, not to ignore our reasonable request to incorporate ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon. Mendocino County has pledged its entire 17.1 million to make this project happen. Support the ELSIE/Wild Oat and you support your constituents.

105-3 By now you are aware investigation into the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon plan has proven to be the plan of choice.

We respectfully request your approval for the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon,

Mr. Lawrence V. Hammer
27371 Blue Lake Court
Willits, CA 95490

Mrs. Susan Hammer
27371 Blue Lake Court
Willits, CA 95490

Cc: Hal Wagenet
P.O. Box 422
Willits, CA 95490

105-1 See General Response 1.3 for a discussion of why the hybrid Alternative L/C does not meet criteria to be the LEDPA. The alternatives analysis of Alternative L/C demonstrated that it would have adverse significant impacts on wetlands in the valley, not improve the quality of wetlands as the author of this letter suggests. The cost of a hybrid Alternative L/C plus the high cost of mitigating its extensive impacts to wetlands and fish habitat would not be "far less expensive" than an alternative designed with the Quail Meadows Interchange. The endangered fish bypass referred to in the letter is a Willits Creek restoration project, which was suggested by Hal Wagenet as a component of the hybrid Alternative L/C. See General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration.

105-2 Caltrans responded to the community's request to study the feasibility of a hybrid Alternative L/C. See General Response 1.3 for the results of that analysis, which concluded that the Hybrid Alternative L/C does not meet LEDPA criteria.

105-3 A large part of the public support for the hybrid Alternative L/C was the misunderstanding that it was the only alternative that would accommodate a Brooktrails Township second access road and the misperception that it would improve local traffic conditions over the other alternatives. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access and General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

106 Marvin Hansard

106-1 See General Response 1.3 regarding the hybrid Alternative L/C and why it does not meet criteria for LEDPA.

Although all of the proposed build alternatives include a connection with S.R. 20, the comment refers to an extension of S.R. 20 from the current in-town intersection to a center valley interchange. See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of the proposed project.

106-2 Caltrans is committed to constructing a bypass of the Willits community. See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for project schedule.

----- Original Message -----
From: Marv & Thelma Hansard
Sent: Saturday, August 17, 2002 3:56 PM
Subject: Route 101 Willits Bypass
To Nancy Mackenzie

Dear Madam:

106-1 I believe I represent the feelings of the silent majority in appealing to the Government to include the Elsie Bypass proposal as a viable alternative. I believe this proposal to be the most beneficial to the City of Willits and Mendocino County and has been based upon a thorough analysis and objectivity. In addition, an on/off ramp providing direct access to Route 20 should be given top priority.

106-2 My family came to Willits in the spring of 1972 from the Los Angeles area. We owned and operated the Coast to Coast Hardware Store until 1984. When we arrived, the lumber industry was the primary source of income and along with a few other small industries provided the jobs and necessary tax base in order for Willits to exist. During the past thirty years, we have witnessed the demise of industry and erosion of our tax base and the loss of jobs. In its place have been a steady influx of extreme environmental activities, many of which have no visible means of support. I believe a better definition of this element of our society would be "Obstructionists" because they have stopped or impeded progress on other projects that would have been beneficial to the City. Their tactics have always been to pack Council Meetings with protests or to keep issues in a state of debate until they die or filing frivolous lawsuits.

I believe I am a conservationist in every sense of the word but I am also aware that humans must have a place on this earth and are entitled to a means for making a living without dependence on special grants or welfare.

I expect a large number of comments received will be from this activist element while many that do not comment are those too busy trying to keep food on the table and do not have the time to become involved. Therefore, it is hoped that you will consider this when reviewing comments.

Sincerely,
Marvin D. Hansard

107 Ray Hebrard

107-1 The Modified Alternative J1T is the Preferred Alternative (see Chapter 2, FEIS/EIR, for a description of this alternative). See General Response 1.3, which discusses the development of the Modified Alternative J1T and why it has the least overall impact to the environment of all alternatives considered in the Draft EIS/EIR.

8/16/02

To: Cher Daniels
From: Ray Hebrard
Re: Willits Bypass.

107-1 I support a 4 lane free way concept that would have the least impact on wildlife and people. That would be either L or C.

Ray Hebrard
5500 Hearst-Willits Rd.
Willits CA.

108 Edna Heidebrink

108-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative (see General Response 1.3 regarding development of this alternative, and Chapter 2 in the FEIS/EIR for a description of this alternative). A center valley interchange is beyond the scope of the bypass project (General Response 1.9).

108-2 Sections 4.4 and 5.4.2 (DEIS/EIR) discuss the agricultural land uses in the project area and related impacts as a result of the project.

108-3 The comment refers to a large oak riparian woodland that has important habitat value. Modified Alternative J1T will minimize impacts to this woodland.

108-4 The proposed bypass project will reduce traffic congestion within Willits.

108-5 Comment noted. Caltrans and FHWA have tried to balance the need for the project with protection of the environment.

108-6 Comment noted. Because the bypass will remove traffic, especially truck traffic from Main Street, traffic noise downtown will be reduced in Willits.

505

Re: Willits By pass,

108-1 This I have been hearing for the last 50 years - just build it!! Bray road seems the best ending near the truck stop - and please an off ramp to town - Commercial would be best the bridge by the library was widened years ago in anticipation as was East Hill Rd. bridge.

108-2 Prime agriculture land - who is really farming - they haven't for years - horses and some hay yes and some cows -

Meadowfoam grows other places in the valley.

108-3 The grove of oaks are probably much oak which can fall any time. and I have a lot full of them.

108-4 I do not go to town any oftener than I absolutely have to because of traffic and I don't want

108-5 to lose my place in life of peace I park.

I am not anti environment but sometimes there is a limit

Thank you

108-6 Oh yes one last thing noise - can't be worse than I hear now

Edna Heidebrink
20876 Baechtel Rd
Willits Ca 95490

Photography by Superstock

Edna Heidebrink
20876 Baechtel Rd.
Willits, CA 95490-4562

109 Richard Hill

109-1 See General Response 1.9, which explains why a center valley interchange is beyond the scope of this project. Any of the valley alternatives could accommodate an additional future interchange.

109-2 Any of the proposed bypass alternatives would reduce traffic congestion on Main Street because interregional traffic will be rerouted/removed from local city streets creating less overall demand of the local infrastructure. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

Any of the valley alternatives, including Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative) would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road (General Response 1.6).

109-3 The comment is referring to the hybrid Alternative L/C. See General Response 1.3, regarding the reasons Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/preferred alternative.

109-4 The comment is referring to the hybrid Alternative L/C. See General Response 1.3, regarding the reasons Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/preferred alternative.

Richard and Claudia Hill
24150 Sherwood Road
Willits, Ca. 95490
rahill2@earthlink.net

July 30, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, Ca. 95833
Attn" Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator
916-274-5809

Dear Ms. Daniels and Ms. MacKenzie:

We are writing out of our concern for several issues regarding Caltrans' current plans to locate the Willits bypass. We have been residents of this community for many years and have seen the flow of traffic increase until it is almost impassable at all times of the day, particularly at the intersection of Sherwood Road and Highway 101 (Main Street) and at the intersection of Highway 20 and Highway 101 (Main Street).

109-1 1. The idea of not including a connection for Highway 20 is a travesty. Why bypass the town and still make Main Street the only way for traffic to travel to and from Fort Bragg and the Coast? We're sure your engineers have noticed the traffic congestion at that intersection now, which also impacts the Safeway store and the California Western Railroad tracks. It is a very dangerous intersection right now and not to mitigate it when the bypass will be constructed seems very short-sighted.

109-2 2. The intersection of Sherwood Road and Highway 101 has already proved to be a treacherous situation. The death of a young girl there several years ago prompted the installation of a traffic light, and with the increasing year-round traffic on Highway 101, the danger has increased proportionally The proximity to the high school, the sharp left turn for northbound traffic entering Sherwood Road, and the amount of traffic using Sherwood Road as the only access and egress for Brooktrails (a subdivision of more than 3000 residents) makes this another very serious situation which could be mitigated by another access route from Brooktrails to the highway.

109-3 We do not expect Caltrans to build a private (County) road into Brooktrails, however the construction of a bypass without consideration of the probable necessity for the construction of a Brooktrails access road would seem to be foolhardy insofar as future costs are concerned. We want the new bypass to extend far enough north to accommodate a future Brooktrails access road in Wild Oat Canyon. This means we urge you to put the northern terminus of the bypass at the old truck scales 1.5 miles north of Willits between the railroad crossing and the sawmill, rather than at Quail Meadows.

109-4 We wholeheartedly support the L1T bypass route and hope you will take our comments into consideration as the deadline for the Willits bypass route selection nears.

Sincerely yours,

Richard A Hill

110 Karen Holden

110-1 See response to Comment 73-5 (Mary Delaney).

110-2 See response to Comment 70-1 (Bill Cronk).

110-3 See response to Comment 62-5 (Mary Carol) and 117-1 (Lynn Dee Johnson). The footprint of a two-lane bypass would in many instances pose similar visual issues as a four-lane bypass.

110-4 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need for the project. This section also addresses the letter's safety concerns and explains that statewide average collision rates for 4-lane divided facilities are substantially lower than for 2-lane conventional highways.

110-5 Caltrans was diligent in considering the community's concerns in the advanced planning stage and during the environmental process. See Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) for a discussion of Caltrans' ongoing coordination with our local partners and other stakeholders.

Dear Ms. Daniels and Ms. MacKenzie,

I have looked at the EIS/EIR, listened to knowledgeable folks around town, queried folks in other towns and drawn on my own experiences living in several large cities and, for the last decade, in Willits.

100-1 I feel that a 4-lane freeway will significantly lessen the beautiful quality of life one comes to Willits for. I know the noise will be a problem; even now the hum of 101 is detectable. Noise travels long distances quite easily, and not only people who live in town, but especially those who live on the east side, or in the hills beyond, will have to contend with an increase in noise as it rises from the freeway. Also, the large footprint of the proposed highway will radically impose itself upon the "smaller" pastoral views we have come to love.

100-2 I understand the need to route some traffic around town (especially trucks!), but I think a 4-lane is excessive. I have never personally experienced the kind of traffic that calls for such a highway, nor do I predict the need for one in the future. The logging industry has all but died in our area and the regions north and west of us, significantly lessening truck travel; anyone traveling to the larger cities in Oregon or Washington takes highway 5. Another concern is the impact of a bypass on local business; I hope the route chosen is not so far out in the valley that the town no longer has any tourist 'presence.'

100-3 I am especially concerned about the unique character and beauty of fauna and flora in the valley. For me this includes the rolling farmland and ranches as well as Baker's meadow foam, oaks, wildlife, and the wetlands of our "little lake." A 2-lane would significantly lessen impact on the ecology. Come spend some time here, and you will begin to feel what we feel for this incredible landscape.

100-4 In response to the safety issue, I am not convinced that a 4-lane is less dangerous than a 2-lane. As I understand it, speed is one of the major concomitants of accidents. It makes sense to me that the lower speeds required on a smaller roadway will help ameliorate such occurrences.

100-5 I appreciate the time and effort you have already put into the project, and can only imagine how complex, difficult and frustrating this job has been-- but I hope you will seriously consider the community's concerns. We will have to *live* with the final decision. I ask simply that our voices be heard.

Sincerely,

Karen

Karen Holden.

111 Robert Houtz

111-1 The Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. General Response 1.3 discusses why Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. Because of the magnitude of Alternative L/C's overall impacts, specifically to wetlands and other waters of the U.S., ACOE would not be able to provide a permit for construction of Alternative L/C.

111-2 See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

111-3 The purpose of the project is to serve interregional traffic resulting in statewide benefits. The project is being funded by state and federal funds, as well as Mendocino County funds.

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA. 95833

This is a letter of deep concern about the Willits By-Pass and its proposed route for the near future. I have been working "in committee" for the sole purpose of helping to select and recommend the best and most plausible route for the needs and future growth of our area. At this
111-1 time it is very necessary that you give this your utmost attention and "do it right" by selecting the Elsie/Wild Cat Canyon proposal.

This route is the most logical environmentally for both the Willits Creek Restoration proposal and
111-2 the new Willits Waste-Water Treatment Plant which is now in the process of building. The importance of managed environment goes hand in hand with placing this By-Pass route in the proper area not only for safety but for the best service for those who will be using this route the most.

One thing is for sure; we are those people
111-3 who will be using it and funding the project.

Please give this request your utmost attention and consideration. Thank you

Robert E. Houtz

Mr. Robert E. Houtz
1491 Harrah Pl.
Willits, CA 95490-9541

112 Robert and Linda Huck

08/26/2002

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie

Reference the Route 101 Willits Bypass Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

112-1 We are in favor of Route C which we believe will effect the least number of dwellings negatively. We also believe it would cause the least amount of damage to the ecosystem.

112-2 We are also in favor of "No Sound Walls" because we don't believe that it is necessary.

112-3 We are in favor of the 4 lane highway because whether or not many feel it would "serve our needs" now, we all know that it is something that will be mandatory in the near further, so why have to do it over again. We believe that it would be cheaper to do it in the first go around.

112-4 We are also in favor of overpasses on each end of Little Lake Valley. We believe that there should be no special off ramp for Highway 20.

Robert F. Huck and Linda J. Huck

112-1 The Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. General Response 1.3 discusses why Alternative C1T is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. Because of the magnitude of Alternative C1T's overall impacts (principally at the north end of the alignment), specifically to wetlands and other waters of the U.S., ACOE would not be able to provide a permit for construction of Alternative C1T.

112-2 Comment noted. Noise abatement is not being considered for Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative). See Section 3.11 (FEIS/EIR) for the results of the Noise study for Modified Alternative J1T. If noise abatement (soundwalls) were proposed, consideration must be given to the opinions of the adjacent resident owners. Noise abatement is not provided if 50 percent or more of the affected residents do not want it.

112-3 Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR) explains in detail the purpose and need for a four-lane bypass.

112-4 Modified Alternative J1T provides an interchange at the north and south termini of the project. Although all of the proposed build alternatives include a connection with S.R. 20, the comment refers to an extension of S.R. 20 from the current in-town intersection to a center valley interchange. General Response 1.9 explains why a center valley interchange is beyond the scope of this project. Any of the valley alternatives could accommodate an additional future interchange.

113 David and Geri Hulse-Stephens

113-1 The difference in noise levels between an operating speed of 65 mph and 50 mph would be between 1 and 2 dBA, assuming the traffic volumes and mix remained the same. Under controlled conditions in an acoustics laboratory, the trained healthy human ear is able to discern changes in sound levels of 1 dBA, when exposed to steady, single frequency ("pure tone") signals in the mid-frequency range. Outside of such controlled conditions, the trained ear can detect changes of 2 dBA in normal environmental noise. It is widely accepted that the average healthy ear, however, can barely perceive noise level changes of 3 dBA.

113-2 See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

113-3 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project and therefore, was not considered in the DEIS/EIR.

David and Geri Hulse-Stephens
915 East Hill Rd.
Willits, CA, 95490

August 2, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento CA 05833
Attn Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Ms. Daniels:

We have reviewed the Draft EIR/EIS for the Willits Bypass and submit to you the following comments:

113-1 The report fails to declare many of the significant impacts that the proposed project would have. Among them are noise and local economic impacts.

At present Little Lake Valley is a quiet rural valley, while just to the south on the four-lane north of Ridgewood grade the freeway creates a disturbing noise level made worse in times by wet weather or westerly winds. A 65-mph freeway in such a small valley as Little Lake Valley would seriously degrade the quality of life for those living near to and at a distance from the freeway. The freeway is proposed to be elevated on fill at an increasing height from south to north with a viaduct elevating it above the wetlands. The viaduct with traffic crossing at speeds of 65 mph and more will have the particularly detrimental effect of amplifying the freeway noise. As a resident in the area of the 3 and 4 noise receptor sites it is unacceptable to me that no mitigation measures will address the substantial noise increase predicted for this area. The impact on the quiet rural quality of area is unacceptable. A decrease in speeds from 65 mph to 50 mph would reduce the noise level substantially. I recommend this to be considered as a mitigation in lieu of soundwalls, which your report determined to be inconsequential in their effectiveness.

113-2 Because of the real threat to local businesses that freeway off-ramp business growth could create there would be a significant impact to local business. This could be mitigated by the creation of conservation easements at the off-ramps to prevent building in this area.

In addition to the above significant impacts, we would like to make these further comments:

113-3 The EIR/EIS does not consider viable the two-lane alternative. We suggest that it be reconsidered as a way to lessen many significant impacts:

A two-lane can wind around areas of biological significance like the oak woodlands on route LT as well as rare plant sites.

General Response 1.3 discusses why Alternative LT is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. The preferred alternative (Modified Alternative J1T) avoids the riparian oak woodlands referred to in this letter.

113-3 cont.

A two-lane with a center divider encouraging slower speeds will be quieter and safer. With the addition of trees in the center and sides it would reduce both pollution and noise.

A two-lane would be slower and thus a more likely candidate for more and shorter off-ramps thus allowing for a Highway 20 off-ramp, which would greatly improve inter-regional traffic. Inter-regional travelers traveling to the Fort Bragg area would have no relief from the present congestion under the new plan so the plan would appear to fail in this part to meet Service level C for inland-to-coast travel.

A two-lane would have less visual impact.

A divided two-lane would have far fewer fatal accidents due to the slower speed.

A two-lane would be quicker to build, cheaper by half, and would have far less detrimental impact on local roadways during the time of construction.

113-4 It is of concern that no East Hill Road overpass appears to be proposed for this project. Please consider that it is the main travel route for residents of the entire south end of the valley and for the Pine Mtn. Subdivision.

113-5 Finally the proposed Quail Meadows interchange creates a further traffic problem for any Brooktrails residents traveling to the south. Already their inter-regional travel is impeded by long waits at the stoplight at the intersection of Highway 101 and Sherwood Road as they attempt to enter the corridor. Further problems would be created as this traffic would be encouraged to travel north to join the new freeway at Quail Meadows, thus impacting already congested Willits High School traffic on the weekday mornings throughout the school year.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Sincerely,

David Hulse-Stephens and Geri Hulse-Stephens

See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of why an S.R. 20 interchange is not being considered for any of the valley alternatives. Traffic volumes on S.R. 20 west of Willits are low when compared to U.S. 101. LOS on S.R. 20 is not expected to be less than LOS C in 2028.

Regarding the statement that a two-lane bypass would result in less noise and safer conditions, see responses to Comment 113-1 and Comment 34-11 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

113-4 The DEIS/EIR, Volume II, Maps 4-7 show the location of structures on each alignment, including an undercrossing (where the local road would go under the state highway) at East Hill Road on each of the valley alternatives.

113-5 Any of the proposed bypass alternatives would reduce traffic congestion on Main Street because interregional traffic will be rerouted/removed from local city streets creating less overall demand of the local infrastructure. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with the Quail Meadows interchange.

114 Roland Hulstein

Roland Hulstein
24965 Ridge Road
Willits, CA. 95490

August 7, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-I
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA. 95833

Maiser Khaled, Chief
District Operations- North
Federal Hwy Administration
980 9th Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA. 95814

Dear Ms. Daniels and Mr. Khaled:

114-1 As a resident of Willits, California, I am writing to express my concerns over Caltrans' propsed Willits Bypass. As a citizen of this community I am aware that the Environmental Impact Report for the project failed to address several very important issues regarding both our human environment and the protections of our natural environment.

114-2 I wish to go on record as opposiing any four-lane highway project, since I believe that your statistics show that a two-lane bypass would be completely adequate to handle projected traffic. In fact, two lanes would be operating at only 50% capacity in the year 2028.

114-3 In addition, the two-lane bypass could easily follow the natural contours of the valley and avoid the destruction of endangered species. Non-freeway speeds would keep noise levels significantly lower, and avoiding the use of elevated roadways would keep the visual degradation of the project to an unavoidable minimum.

114-4 Lastly, a two-lane bypass could allow several exits into the extended Willits community to make the entire project far more useful to the residents it is most likely to impact. Since the four-lane project would have no access into town or into the Brooktrails area, it would seriously damage tourist-based business, and any traffic headed for Fort Bragg on Highway 20 would still need to come through Willits. The fact that a two-lane project would also be much less expensive should also be a major consideration in its favor.

114-5 Please refer to letters written by Richard Estabrook, Ellen Drell, David Drell, Christopher Martin and Hal Wagenet for more complete arguments. I support their excellent work and hope to hear that you support our desire to keep our community healthy and beautiful for many years to come.

Sincerely,

Roland Hulstein

114-1 The comment does not discuss the issues that the writer feels the DEIS/EIR failed to address, and therefore, no response can be prepared. FHWA and Caltrans are confident in the adequacy of the conclusions presented in the technical studies and the DEIS/EIR prepared for this project. See also General Response 1.11.

114-2 Caltrans' analysis of a two-lane bypass concluded that it would not meet the purpose and need of the project, and therefore, it was not included as an alternative in the DEIS/EIR. See General Response 1.10. The comment refers to a Value Analysis for this project that took place before final detailed traffic studies were available to the team. Caltrans' traffic studies concluded that a two-lane alternative would not improve safety and LOS as much as a four-lane alternative. A two-lane facility will provide an LOS "D" at peak hour in 2008, remaining at LOS "D" through the 20-year design period.

114-3 Neither a two-lane nor a four-lane bypass could follow the natural contours of the valley, as the design of any bypass in the valley would need to avoid floodplain impacts. A two-lane bypass would not reduce impacts by 50 percent due to required design components, such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. Detailed studies of visual, noise, and biological impacts were not conducted for a two-lane bypass. See General Response 1.10 and response to Comment 73-5 (Mary Delaney).

114-4 Current highway design standards restrict the number of access points on access-controlled grade-separated facilities to no more than one every 3 km (2 mi) in rural areas. Thus, there is no reason to believe that a two-lane access-controlled grade-separated facility would have any more connections to the local road system than a four-lane freeway. The comment correctly notes that through-traffic would still utilize S.R. 20 through Willits in the event of a bypass along the alignment of Alternatives C1T, J1T, and LT. Existing travel related businesses will continue to serve travelers headed to Fort Bragg via S.R. 20. With Alternative E3, S.R. 20 traffic would be removed from Willits. Through-traffic on U.S. 101 would have access to Willits at both the northern and southern interchanges, with any of the valley alternatives. Caltrans will relinquish Main Street north of the S.R. 20 intersection. The City may choose to restrict truck traffic on this segment, which would improve access to existing non-tourism related businesses.

114-5 See responses to comment letters 34 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning, submitted by Richard Estabrook); 35 (Willits Environmental Center submitted by David Drell); 73 (Mary Delaney; Christopher Martin submitted a copy of that form letter); 80 (Ellen Drell); 84 (Richard Estabrook); and 212 (Hal Wagenet).

115 Bill Jack

115-1 The construction of an interchange at Quail Meadows is independent of the number of motorists that live in Brooktrails and utilize Sherwood Road. With the construction of a bypass, interregional traffic will be removed from local city streets creating less overall demand of the local infrastructure. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations at Quail Meadows interchange.

115-2 See General Response 1.6, which explains that the Quail Meadows Interchange will accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road.

115-3 See response to Comment 139-7 (Karina McAbee). The City of Willits may close north Main Street to through truck traffic once the bypass is built.

115-4 Caltrans appreciates your comments and your interest in the proposed project.

Bill Jack
1513 Camellia Pl
Willits, Ca 95490
707-459-3542

125

July 29·2002

To Whom It May Concern,
RE: Proposed Willits By-Pass

I would like to share my thoughts on the Willits By-Pass from three separate perspectives (1) school trustee (2) Brooktrails resident and (3) retired long time business owner.

115-1 As a third term school trustee, I feel strongly that the proposed Quail Meadows Interchange would have many negative effects in the area of our High School & Bus Barn and the Sherwood Road bottle-neck, these areas would even be further impacted. The safety factors are of primary concern and should eliminate this route as a strong consideration

115-2 I've been a resident of the Brooktrails Township for some eighteen years and know that the CIT option north of the truck scales would offer the best route if it were coupled with the necessary Wild Cat Canyon Connection to Brooktrails as a second route. With some 3700 current residents this area will be a constant growth factor, with significant traffic and safety issues in the future, which should be addressed with the ByPass issue now.

115-3 Being a retired business owner of a hardware store, I was disappointed that the traffic travelling on Hwy 20 to Fort Bragg wasn't addressed to my satisfaction Flow thorough traffic with tourism, RV, and commercial truck use is high and still would impact downtown and be inconvenient for their use.

115-4 Thank you for allowing my input in this major undertaking.

Sincerely,
Bill Jack
1513 Camellia Pl
Willits, Calif 95490
707-459-3542

116 Richard Jeske

Dear Ms. Daniels,

I am writing in regards to the Willits Bypass, and the Draft Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report.

I have been a resident of Willits for 23 years. My wife, daughter, and I live on East Hill Road.

I have some serious concerns about the proposed Willits bypass. They are:

116-1 ➢ NOISE. I am sure that the bypass will produce a significant increase in the noise level at my home. I am outside a lot. I have a beautiful, established organic garden, with over 60 varieties of grapes. My wife and I sleep outside on the deck in the summer. We eat meals outside. I am quite sure that we will hear the highway much more if it is built in the likely proposed area.

116-2 ➢ VISUAL IMPACT. My family and I have an unobstructed view of the valley right now. The proposed bypass will change that. No amount of plantings will sufficiently address that in my lifetime. I did not move to Willits to live next to a freeway.

116-3 ➢ 2 LANE OPTION. I'm not sure Willits needs a bypass. The Willits bottleneck has been called the worst traffic problem in Northern California. Get real. The traffic is an inconvenience during part of the day, and especially on Friday afternoon. The amount of time that traffic is slowed is minimal, in comparison to traffic jams in the Bay Area or Santa Rosa. What we really need is either an alternate route for locals to get around, or a truck route for through traffic to get around Willits. IF there is really a sufficient need for a bypass, a TWO LANE ALTERNATIVE would be enough to solve the problem. If you look at the amount of traffic north of Willits, where there are 2 lanes, there is never a traffic problem. 2 lanes are enough to get around Willits. This would be a much more acceptable alternative to having a 4-lane expressway, and it would cost much less.

I am asking that you include a 2-lane alternative as an option

Please take these comments into consideration.

Respectfully,

Richard Jeske

116-1 The letter does not state the location of the residence so it is difficult to address this comment. However, FHWA states, "Traffic noise is not usually a serious problem for people who live more than 500 feet from heavily traveled freeways or more than 100 to 200 feet from lightly traveled roads." This is based on the FHWA Noise Abatement Criteria of Leq(h) 67 dBA for residential areas.

116-2 The author of this letter does not state where on East Hill Road his residence is located, so we do not know which valley alternative would have the most visual impact where he lives, and cannot address this comment.

116-3 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane bypass will not meet the purpose and need for the project for interregional traffic, and therefore was not considered in the DEIS/EIR. The bypass will result in a side benefit of reducing local traffic congestion. Also, the City of Willits was awarded a Community Based Transportation Planning Grant (California Department of Transportation) to study alternative transportation corridors in the city limits that will help relieve local traffic congestion. The study (Baechtel Road/Railroad Avenue Corridor Community Design Study, 2003) will be used to obtain funding for planning and design of a preferred alternative.

117 Lynn Dee Johnson

117-1 See Appendix A (FEIS/EIR) for mitigation measures that are proposed to reduce impacts from the project.

117-2 A center valley interchange was rejected through the project development process. See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of why a center valley interchange on the valley alternatives is beyond the scope of the proposed bypass project. See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

117-3 See response to Comment 117-1. An extensive array of mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts from the bypass.

117-4 The General Response 1.10 regarding two-lane alternative. See also response to Comment 47-6 (Carol Kuhling Barrett) for why a two-lane facility would not result in half the impacts of a four-lane facility.

Lynn Dee Johnson
3001 Ridgewood Rd.
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 459-4660

August 5, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Ms. Daniels,

After reviewing the EIR for the Willits bypass, I believe that there are several Significant Impacts that this project will inflict upon my community. These must not be ignored.

117-1 The four-lane project in any of the proposed locations will greatly increase the noise in our valley. It will result in a loss of wetlands, farmland and wildlife habitat that cannot be wished away. Real mitigation measures and careful planning are required to allow precious life forms to continue to exist.

117-2 The businesses on Main Street will be greatly affected if there is no middle interchange. We do not want business to relocate to cloverleaf interchanges at the edges of town. Conservation easements are required to mitigate that eventuality.

117-3 As currently planned, this four-lane monster will significantly impact the current visual delight of our Little Lake Valley. The current plan ignores the value of rural beauty. A few acorns platted here and there hardly mitigates the loss.

117-4 I am convinced that the two-lane bypass is a viable alternative that is technically feasible. It must be considered. The impact it would make, regardless of the route, would significantly mitigate my concerns.

It would generate less noise and visual impact. Create one half the footprint therefore doing less environmental damage. Local business could survive because traffic wouldn't be flying by our town at 70 mph. I find it the most appealing option that would provide an acceptable level of service and a price that taxpayers can afford for the projected life of the project.

I insist that a two-lane alternative be considered.

I appreciate this opportunity to influence the decisions of my government.

Sincerely,

Lynn Dee Johnson

118 Diane Joyce

118-1 Comment noted. A four-lane bypass meets the purpose and need for the project. Further discussion can be found in General Response 1.10 on why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

08/26/2002 12:54 PM

I AM A PROPERTY OWNER ON THE WESTSIDE NEAR KOA.

118-1 **I WANT A FOUR-LANE BYPASS.**

MOST OF US WHO WANT A FOURLANE BYPASS DID NOT SHOW UP, AT RECENT HEARINGS, BECAUSE **WE THOUGHT IT WAS ALREADY IN THE BAG,** AND WE WERE MOST UPSET THAT THE LOUD/SMALL OPPOSITION HAS AGAIN BEEN ABLE TO WRENCH YOUR PROGRESS ON THE FOURLANE BYPASS.

I HAVE SOME KNOWLEDGE OF THE EXPANSIVE EFFORTS YOU HAVE EXTENDED.

THERE IS LOUD LOUD OPPOSITION, COMING FROM A VERY VERY SMALL GROUP OF PERSONS.

POO POO ON THE 2-LANE.

119 Eve Jursch

119-1 See response to Comment 59-2 (Gregg Byers). See also General Response 1.11.

119-2 See response to Comment 30-3 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

Eve Jursch
6100 Hearst Rd.
Willits, CA 95490
707 459-4813

August 8, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Mgmt S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attn. Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coord

Maiser Khaled, Chief
District Operations – North
Federal Highway Administration
980 9th St. Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms. Daniels and Mr. Khaled:

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Willits Bypass and I have the following comments.

I moved to Willits 11 years ago as part of my retirement plan. I am a third generation Californian, having lived in the Bay Area and Southern California with my early heritage in Napa Valley. When I made the decision to retire I was hard-pressed to find a spot left in California that that would give me the rural beauty and natural landscape that I desired. I was excited to find Mendocino County and Willits, in particular. The reason I moved here was because it had a rural, peaceful character, a pastoral countryside and was not marred by freeways and city development. I've loved living here.
These are my concerns regarding the proposed bypass:

119-1

1. Noise – I am aware the Willits Bypass will create a great amount of noise. **Any** increase in the existing noise level created by the bypass is a significant impact that will substantially alter the natural qualities and serenity of the Willits area. Any noise level greater than **0** must be considered by you as a significant impact. All of the alternatives offered will substantially increase the existing noise level. **Noise must be listed as an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all alternatives in Chapter 6 of your report.**

119-2

2. Visual Impact – Little Lake Valley offers lovely natural vistas that are an integral part of the Willits community's unique rural character. I enjoy looking at these vistas every day that I travel into town. The EIS/EIR lists 10 mitigation measures which will supposedly reduce visual impacts to less that significant. While that's a good intent, it is impossible to hide such and enormous structure. Regardless of Caltrans' efforts to mitigate visual impacts, a freeway going through Little Lade Valley will be a visible eyesore and will significantly degrade the rural character and beauty of the area. **Visual impact must be listed as an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all alternatives in Chapter 6.**

119-3 See responses to Comments 26-1 (California Oak Foundation), 27-1 (California Native Plant Society), and 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch). See General Response 1.3 which discusses development of Modified Alternative J1T to avoid and minimize impacts, and General Response 1.11 regarding impact conclusions in DEIS/EIR.

119-4 See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

119-5 For discussion of why a two-lane alternative is not being considered, see General Response 1.10. See also response to Comment 34-11 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

119-3

3. The EIS/EIR concludes that there are not significant impacts of Alternative L that cannot be mitigated. This is a false statement. Alternative L destroys the only significant area of valley oak woodland left in Little Lake Valley and it buries under fill a significant portion of the beautiful and productive Coleman Ranch. In addition, mitigation measures "FRM-1" and "FRM-3" are unfeasible and therefore cannot be considered as mitigation of farmland impacts. **These impacts of Alternative L must be listed as "Unavoidable Significant Impacts" in Chapter 6.** Without this disclosure, it is not possible to assess the comparative merits of the alternatives.

119-4

4. I am concerned about development that would occur around the interchange. Throughout the years, there has been much discussion among the citizens of Willits about prohibiting development around the interchanges to protect businesses in town. The EIS/EIR must include mitigation measures for Caltrans to establish conservation easements on all properties adjacent to the interchanges in order to protect the Willits business district from commercial sprawl outside the City of Willits. **If Caltrans cannot guarantee the establishment of conservation easements, then interchange development, the loss of the rural character we now enjoy and the additional loss of local business as a result, must be declared as an unavoidable significant environmental impact**. Zoning is not a guarantee against future development because zoning can easily be changed by a governing body. Conservation easements are the only way to protect the properties in perpetuity. I want the rural character of this community preserved.

119-5

In summary, the freeway bypass has a large negative impact on the rural aspect of this community. Some proposals were made for a 2-lane bypass. At least this proposal would be less of an intrusion on the character of the town and countryside of Willits. In Chapter 3, it is stated that two-lane alternatives were dropped from consideration because they did not meet the "purpose and need". However, a two-lane bypass would "reduce delays and improve safety" virtually the same as a 4 lane freeway bypass. Level of Service C is an arbitrary and legally unsupportable condition. As you are aware, Caltrans has recently modified the Route Concept Report to allow some two-lane facilities along Highway 101 to operate at Level of Service "E", partly because of the area's high environmental sensitivities. Little Lake Valley has similar environmental sensitivities. A 2-lane bypass needs to by seriously considered as a alternative to the 4-lane freeway.
As I travel up from Santa Rosa and move through 2 lane bypasses and roads I am reminded of how beautiful California still is in some places. Please work with us to keep the natural environment of this beautiful community, Willits, intact.

Sincerely,

Eve Jursch

Eve Jursch

120 Bernard Kamoroff

August 5, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
Attention Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento CA 95833

Re: Willits Highway 101 Bypass

Dear Ms. Daniels:

During the eleven years I have lived in Willits, this community has been working with Caltrans on the Highway 101 Bypass.

Willits area residents, the Willits City Council, the business community, the Environmental Center, and the agencies involved in emergency services have devoted many, many hours to the Willits Highway 101 Bypass. We have discussed with Caltrans, in great detail, all of our concerns and suggestions for the Bypass.

The result?

120-1 **Caltrans' proposal (the draft EIS/EIR) ignores every local concern.** Caltrans seems not to consider or even care about the 10,000 people who live and work in the impacted area, who must deal with the bypass seven days a week, every day of the year.

120-2 **I protest Caltrans' proposal.** It is extremely unsatisfactory to the people who live and work in and around Willits.

I specifically support the City Council's recommendations, as explained in the City of Willits' Response to the Willits DEIS/DEIR, especially:

120-3 1. **Northern Exchange should be at the truck scales** (C1T north, aka "Elsie"), not at Quail Meadows (L1T north). L1T is too close to the high school and not compatible with plans to bring a second access from Sherwood Road to Highway 101. The local fire department, which provides almost all of the emergency services on Highway 101, and the county Office of Emergency Services have voiced opposition to the L1T exchange. To my knowledge, absolutely no one in our area wants the exchange where Caltrans proposes to put it.

120-4 2. **Prohibiting commercial development at the exchanges**. This is not wanted by residents or the City Government, yet Caltrans does not include any provisions to prohibit such development.

120-1 See response to Comment 131-16 (Michael Lightrain) regarding the extensive public involvement in the development of the bypass project, which was critical in developing the alternatives that were considered in the DEIS/EIR. Further, after public circulation of the DEIS/EIR, Caltrans, FHWA, the NEPA 404 resource agencies, and local government worked together to incorporate local concerns including the business park, the park/recreation complex, and the oak riparian woodland into Alternative J1T. This alternative had been identified in the DEIS/EIR (along with Alternative LT) as the Least Environmentally Damaging Practicable Alternative (Appendix H, Alternatives Analysis). As a result of public input, modifications were made to Alternative J1T to reduce its impacts to community resources while minimizing impacts to wetlands and other waters of the U.S.

120-2 The author does not clearly state what aspect of the project he finds unsatisfactory. In the DEIS/EIR, Caltrans and FHWA proposed a four-lane facility on one of four alignments (Alternatives E3, C1T, J1T, or LT). The DEIS/EIR also allowed for alternatives to be recombined into "hybrid" alternatives (Section 1.5, DEIS/EIR).

120-3 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction. See General Response 1.3, which discusses the reasons that Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/preferred alternative. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations at Quail Meadows Interchange. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

120-4 See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

120-5 3. **A Highway 20 interchange is needed**. This is not part of Caltrans' Bypass plans.

120-6 **I further request that Caltrans build a two-lane highway.** A two-lane alternative is much more in keeping with the amount of through traffic and the character of this area, yet Caltrans refuses to even include a two-lane option in its choices.

120-7 I am a citizen of this state, and this is my home. **The Caltrans proposal ignores, overrides, or fails to address most of my concerns.**

Sincerely,

Bernard Kamoroff
PO Box 1240
Willits CA 95490

copy to:
Maiser Khlaed, Chief, District Operations
North Federal Highway Administration
980 9th St, Suite 400
Sacramento CA 95814

120-5 See General Response 1.9, which discusses why a center valley interchange on any of the valley alternatives is beyond the scope of this project. Any of the valley alternatives could accommodate an additional interchange as a future separate project.

120-6 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of a two-lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

120-7 It is not possible to resolve every issue brought forward by the public, due to environmental, regulatory, technical, cost, and other constraints, but where possible, Caltrans and FHWA have responded to public concerns. Because of public input, Modified Alternative J1T was developed to avoid critical community resources while meeting the requirements of the Clean Water Act, Section 404. See response to Comment 131-16 (Michael Lightrain) regarding the extensive public involvement in the development of this project. Caltrans and FHWA will continue coordinating with local government throughout final design and construction of the project.

121 Gregory Kanne

121-1 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of a two-lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

121-2 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. General Response 1.3 discusses why the hybrid Alternative L/C does not meet the criteria for LEDPA because of its overall environmental harm, including adverse impacts to wetlands and to federally listed fish species. Note that Alternative L/C was studied in the DEIS/EIR using the nodal approach (Section 1.5, DEIS/EIR). See responses to comment letter 212 (Hal Wagenet).

121-3 The comment addresses two different subjects: the environmental document and project planning. The EIS/EIR document discloses information about the project, its potential impacts, and measures to minimize impacts. Project planning was used to develop the alternative bypass alignments. Regarding adequacy of the impact analyses in the DEIS/EIR, see response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch). Regarding bypass project planning, see response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff). Note also that since project planning began in 1962, approximately 30 alternatives have been considered as a result of public and governmental agency input and independent investigation by Caltrans staff (Section 3.6, DEIS/EIR).

Gregory Kanne
20 Pine St., #4
Willits, California 95490
(707) 459-2438

August 8, 2002

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator
Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833

Dear Ms. Daniels:

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Willits Bypass, and I have the following Comments:

121-1 For 15 of the last 17 years I lived in Dos Rios, CA, (28 miles NE of Willits) while I worked in Willits. I made this commute everyday and never had any traffic problems after I passed Willits High School which is within city limits. This allows me to realize that a two-lane bypass would be satisfactory for many years. Your EIS/EIR flippantly dismisses a two-lane bypass. I think it should be given serious consideration. It is obvious to everyone that the State of California has significant economic difficulties that will only deteriorate in the immediate future. A two-lane bypass is fiscally, environmentally and pragmatically viable and responsible.

121-2 I feel that Willits and California absolutely need a bypass. If we spend the money we should spend it wisely. Whether the bypass is two lanes or four lanes, its placement is of vital concern. The suggestions offered by County Supervisor candidate, Hal Wagenet, that is ELSIE, make more sense than any of the options covered in the EIS/EIR.

121-3 I think the EIS/EIR is shoddy and actually a sham in the way it dismisses noise pollution, woodland and farmland impact and impact on local business. Just because we need a bypass it doesn't mean that there is any excuse to ramrod poor planning and the wasting of tax dollars.

Listen to the City of Willits and to its citizens.

Respectfully yours,

Gregory J. Kanne

122 James F. King

08/26/2002

Dear Ms. Daniels:

122-1 I reside at 290 Bittenbender Lane, Willits, California. I have lived in Willits for 25 years. I strongly support the concept of a bypass around Willits. I have to deal with miserable traffic on a daily basis, and it is getting worse.

122-2 I oppose the idea of a two-lane (one lane each way) bypass. Such a highway would be obsolete the day it was built. The only feasible alternative is a four-lane bypass. I am also opposed to alternative E3 because it would be more expensive than the other alternatives and would entail major cut and fill work through unstable hills.

122-3 I support alternative J1T because it is the most natural route and would entail the least environmental impact. However, I think it should be modified so as to allow Brooktrails traffic a ready access onto and off the freeway without driving through the middle of town.

122-4 There are large numbers Willits residents who support the bypass. I am hoping their sentiments aren't drowned out by a small contingent of vocal activists who want to stop the freeway.

Thanks for considering my views.

James F. King

122-1 The bypass would provide an uncongested facility for interregional traffic and also would result in reduced traffic congestion on Willits' Main Street. Existing and future-without-project traffic conditions on U.S. 101/Main Street are discussed in Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR).

122-2 The DEIS/EIR (Section 3.6.2) explains that a two-lane facility would be functionally obsolete two years after construction. General Response 1.10 provides additional discussion of why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

122-3 See General Response 1.3, which discusses the reasons that Alternative J1T is no longer under consideration for construction and the development of the Modified Alternative J1T, the LEDPA/preferred alternative.

See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

122-4 Comment noted. The focus of the bypass is to serve interregional traffic, but the bypass also will benefit the City of Willits by reducing traffic congestion on local streets.

123 Jeanne H. Koelle

123-1 The purpose of the proposed bypass is to reduce delays, improve safety, and achieve a level of service of at least "C" for *interregional traffic on U.S. 101*. However, additional benefits of a bypass will be to reduce traffic congestion on local streets in Willits, improving conditions for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well. Removing U.S. 101 from Main Street will make it possible for the City to implement the goals and policies of its Bicycle and Pedestrian Specific Plan (1999) of safety, access, and quality of life. Also, the City of Willits was awarded a Community Based Transportation Planning Grant (California Department of Transportation) to study alternative transportation corridors in the city limits that will help relieve local traffic congestion. The study (Baechtel Road/Railroad Avenue Corridor Community Design Study, 2003) will be used to obtain funding for planning and design of a preferred alternative.

General Response 1.10 explains why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

Name: JEANNE H. KOELLE
Address: 32 E. SAN FRANCISCO AV. WILLITS, CA 95490
Phone: 707-459-1511

Date: 7/31/02

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Ms. Daniels:

123-1 Hello... How can I express myself clearer... Willits need a traffic SOLUTION... not a bandaid! A two-lane (2)... TWO; to help ease traffic in town. We need community oriented traffic help... not speedway bypass, excuse me, you don't exist, zip up the environment, poach the beautiful valley, corporate mentality ever present in California thinking. Have you ever lived here, ever stayed the weekend to understand life here?... We have a whole Main Street which needs attention, businesses which need better access, bike lanes, walking paths which can be travelled on safely.

123-2 Maybe it's time you listen to the PEOPLE, think WHOLISTICALLY about the future and create a real solution instead of a "bandaid". We like our valley, our endangered species and our winter "flooding" just the way it is. It's SO NATURAL!

Sincerely,
Jeanne H Koelle

123-2 See response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff) and 131-16 (Michael Lightrain) regarding the extensive public involvement in the development of the bypass project, which was critical in developing the alternatives that were considered in the DEIS/EIR. See also Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) concerning public involvement since circulation of the DEIS/EIR. Caltrans and FHWA will continue coordinating with the City of Willits and other local representatives throughout final design and construction of the project.

124 Patricia Kovner

124-1 Caltrans and FHWA are confident in the adequacy of the impact and significance conclusions presented in the technical studies and DEIS/EIR prepared for this project. See also response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch). General Response 1.10 explains why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

124-1 Re: EIS/EIR for the Willits Bypass ..... noise must be listed as "Unavoidable Significant Impact" along with the loss of local business. A two-lane bypass would significantly reduce noise and economic impacts by drawing less tourist traffic out of town. Also visual impact must be listed as well.

Please help preserve our rural life.

Thank you.

Patricia Kovner
POB 656
Laytonville, CA 95454

125 Lynda LaCount

125-1 Land that is not Williamson Act Contract land or that is outside the study limit would not be included on Atlas Map 13 (DEIS/EIR Volume 2).

Regarding erosion issue, see response to Comment 48-1 (Andrea Beene).

Lynda LaCount
19873 N. Hwy 101
Willits, CA 95490
(707) 4590511
August 7, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office Of Environmental Mangement 2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 95833

Maiser Khaled, Chief
District Operations - North
Federal Highway Administrastion
980 9th Street, Suite 400
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Ms Daniels and Mr. Khaled

I have reviewed tthe Draft Envirnmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Willits Bypass, and Have the following concerns and comments.

125-1 I own a house and acreage south of Willits and East of 101 Hwy near Haehl Creek. And I also am a partial owner of the Schmidbauer Ranch. It is my understand that part of the ranch is in the Williamson act and the rest was conveniently left out. So that you can move Haehl Creek and encroach on the Schmidbauer Ranch some more. If you are not aware of the erosion problems with this creek and from Cal-trans previous practices along Haehl Creek maybe you should come take a look. I am very concerned about the increased velocity of water flow down this creek. At the Open House July 24 at the Willits City Hall. I ask your Biologist what they were planning to do about increased velocity of water in this creek. He assured me that all avenues would be looked at and we would be taken care off. I'm just wondering if your going to take care of it as you have taken care of previous problems surrounding Haehl Creek and the piece of property that was purchased in the 1960's. You have not taken care of any on the erosion problems in this area until this year.Its a little late for public relations. I have lost a portion of my property do to a land slide. (Pictures enclosed) And have

not seen you do anything about it. Is this how we are going to be taken care of in the future? I don't feel you have in any way adequitely addressed the erosion that has occured and will occur with changes to Haehl Creek.

125-2 In a contract signed between you and my grandparents you allow for access to our property at an interchange adjacent to the ranch. At that time you paid less for the acquired property, stating that at the time of completioin of the freeway our property would be more valuable because of this access. Yet in your current plans you allow for no such access. Is this how we are going to be taken care of?

125-3 There is a significant number of black-tail deer and other wildlife which will be crossing back and forth at the railroad underpass and proposed highway. In the Haehl creek area there most certainly should be a wildlife under-crossing to allow the deer and other species access to acreage and water on the west and east sides of the project. I think this undercrossing should be built to allow passing so that I am not cut off from the rest of the Ranch. And so my parents, The Schmidbauer are not cut off from there property on the west side of the proposed Highway project.

125-4 The proposed plan does not satisfactorily deal with the botanical resources of the area. Nor does it provided Brooktrails owners safe or adequate access. There needs to be a Hwy 20 interchange so that trucks and travelers heading west don't still have to go thru town. The reason for a By-Pass is to by pass the town not send half the traffic thru it. I think Cal-Trans should look further into the two lane alternative. How can, having a interchange at Haehl Creek which route all the truck traffic for Hwy 20 , as well as tourist traffic mixed with Brooktrails residents back thru Willits going to improve the traffic problems. The turn off to my and other drive ways along Hwy 101 is so dangerous. I think it needs to be addressed and taken care. The speed needs to be reduce from Walker Road north into Willits. And possibly a third (Turn) lane put in. I am also very concerned about the noise and visual impacts for my property and the decrease in property value because of proposed changes to my

property. I do not wish to be "taken care of" in the fashion that Cal--Trans has this far with this Project, and with the contract signed with my grandparents..

Sincerly
Lynda LaCount
Lynda LaCount.

125-2 The project shows an access road to the Schmidbauer ranch on the valley alternatives (Maps 25A, 27A, and 28A; DEIS/EIR Volume 2). After public circulation of the DEIS/EIR, the Upper Haehl Creek Interchange, for the valley alternatives, was redesigned from a trumpet to a diamond-style interchange for better access from the property. The revision would allow access to the Schmidbauer Ranch from the east side of the interchange through a private road opening in access control. See also response to Comment 271-4 (Lynda Schmidbauer).

125-3 The proposed viaducts and bridged creek crossings will provide suitable undercrossings for wildlife. In addition, Caltrans will continue to work with the resources agencies to address the kinds and locations of additional animal undercrossings that may be required. Also, see responses to Comment 125-2 and Comment 271-4 (Lynda Schmidbauer) regarding access.

125-4 The reference to a proposed plan requires clarification. The DEIS/EIR proposes four build alternatives to constructing a four-lane bypass – a preferred alternative had not been proposed or selected in the DEIS/EIR. Subsequent to public circulation of the DEIS/EIR and completion of the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) Alternatives Analysis process, the Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative.

The comment regarding biological resources is too vague to provide a response. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails second access road. General Response 1.9 explains why a center-valley interchange is beyond the scope of the project. General Response 1.10 explains why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project. Regarding adequacy of the impact analyses in the DEIS/EIR, see response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

Flashing beacons with a changeable message sign have been installed at the Walker Road and U.S. 101 intersection to alert drivers on northbound U.S. 101 to oncoming traffic from Walker Road.

See response to Comment 20-4 (Mendocino County Board of Supervisors) regarding traffic speeds at Upper Haehl Creek Interchange) and response to Comment 271-5 (Lynda Schmidbauer) regarding S.R. 20 traffic. See response to Comment 125-2 regarding the contract referred to in this comment.

126 Beth Lang

126-1 Caltrans detailed traffic studies concluded that a two-lane facility would not meet the purpose and need of the project. See response to Comment 34-15 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

Modified Alternative J1T was been selected as the LEDPA because it has the least overall impact of any of the alternatives. Modified Alternative J1T avoids the oak riparian woodland referred to in this letter. Also, Modified Alternative J1T was placed behind a corridor of tall, dense riparian vegetation as a visual barrier between the viaduct structure and the park/recreation complex.

126-2 The bypass will remove traffic from local streets, resulting in a reduction in traffic in front of the high school. See General Response 1.8.

126-3 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

126-4 See response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff) and 131-16 (Michael Lightrain) regarding the extensive public involvement in the development of the bypass project, which was critical in developing the alternatives that were considered in the DEIS/EIR. See also Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) concerning public involvement since circulation of the DEIS/EIR, which was crucial in modifying Alternative J1T to respond to local concerns. Caltrans and FHWA will continue coordinating with the City of Willits and other local representatives throughout final design and construction of the project.

508

Attn: Nancy MacKinzie -

I'm writing to add my opinion concerning the Willits By-Pass. I request you reconsider the situation there. Please go back to your own research when you concluded, a two lane bypass
126-1 was sufficient for the traffic and lack of funding makes it more attractive. Please do not destroy our environment by cutting an old oak stand, or blemish our beauty by building large concrete overpasses and add noise pollution (and air) into the valley. I suggest you choose the least environmentally impactful alternative, so as little damage as possible is effected upon our beautiful Valley. I'd like to see a two lane bypass placed close to town (but not too close). The Quail Meadows exit is too close
126-2 to the High School and should not be put there so we can protect our children. We also need
126-3 another exit from Sherwood Rd. onto 101, the congestion there is dangerous to the students.
126-4 The Caltrans Cookie Cutter approach doesn't work for us here. I hope you can be receptive and responsive to our people, our environment and the actual need in this situation. The real problem of congestion in Willits is the proliferation of local traffic and the

The purpose of the bypass is to reduce delays, improve safety, and achieve at least LOS "C" in the project area for *interregional traffic on U.S. 101*. See response to Comment 123-1 (Jeanne H. Koelle).

126-5 General Response 1.3 discusses the development of the Modified Alternative J1T, which as the least overall environmental impacts of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR. Mitigation measures were proposed in the DEIS/EIR to reduce impacts as a result of the project; Appendix A of the FEIS/EIR proposes mitigation measures to reduce impacts of Modified Alternative J1T, the preferred alternative.

lack of alternative corridors (N-S + E-W) to alleviate Main St traffic.

126-5 I have been driving the Redgewood Grade for years struggling with its dangers, failures and traffic problems. Please don't let the Willits By Pass become another debacle like that. Plan this out now including the mitigating factors to deal with sound and air quality pollution, protection of sensitive areas of our environment and respect for our peoples wishes. Thank you for considering these comments. I wish you clear sight and thinking and mental flexability with this situation.

Beth Lang

P.S. I was disappointed to read in the S.F. Examiner one of your representatives was less than honest in quoting how long a trip through Willits took.

127 Gura Lashlee

127-1 See Table 3-5 (DEIS/EIR) for reasons why some easterly alternatives were eliminated early in the process. The most easterly alternative considered in the DEIS/EIR – Alternative C1T – does not meet Section 404(b)(1) Clean Water Act criteria due to its overall environmental harm.

General Response1.9 explains why a center valley interchange is beyond the scope of the current project.

127-2 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection. See General Response 1.8.

127-3 See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for project schedule.

Aug. 26, 2002 443

Hello,

Build the freeway!

127-1 place it as far east of town as possible.

Extend highway 20 to connect with bypass.

4 lanes/2 lanes I don't care.

Some locals – The Drells and their 'droids – will do anything and everything to sabotage any road.

Most of the city and county government can't find their way out of a paper sack so don't expect any bright ideas from them.

127-2 Also the proposed Sherwood Rd. area interchange is really a bad idea. It will only increase traffic problems at traffic signal area (main St. and Sherwood). Please reconsider this area.

127-3 Hopefully you can build the bypass before I get to old to drive.

Happy Trails,

Gura Lashlee

27900 Skyview Rd.
Willits, 95490

128 John LeFan

The following individuals submitted duplicates of the following letter:

LeFan, John
Woolsey, Ron
Long, Freddie

A similar letter was published as a letter to the editor of the Willits News. The following individuals submitted a copy of the letter from the Willits News or a similar form letter:

Breitlow, Betty
Coyner, C.
Crossman, Steve
Dale, Eric
Hall, Bill, Thelma, and John
Ivancich, Larry
Janusz, Allen
Jolley-Crawford, Yvonne
Kovner, Steve
McEdwards, Don
McNair, Marilyn
Peterson, Mazie
Shorba, Mary
Sinnott, Lauren
Tjepkes, Harriet
Tjepkes, Robert
Turnbull, Fred
Waters, Gloria
Welker, Mara
Weller, Ann
Wertheimer, Susan
Weston, Jeri
Wolfe, Jeanne

8/7/02

Cher Daniels
Caltrans Chief of Environmental Management S-1

With regard to the Willits bypass, I strongly urge you to consider the following options that have not been addressed for this bypass:

128-1 **A 2 lane bypass**. It is very safe, it is cheaper (will save $70 million), it is much quieter, it will impact the visual beauty of the valley minimally, will take out less farmland, remove fewer large oaks, less impact on our local economy, requires less rock fill, will allow for the possibility of a highway 20 interchange, and will be adequate for 100 years according to Caltrans own internal figures. ("Traffic projections do not justify a 4-lane freeway"-a quote from Caltrans own1999 Analysis report)

128-2 **Consideration of the ELSIE version route** (combo of L amd E) as suggested by Hal Wagenet, with his brilliant wetlands mitigation (change outlet creek back to its original 1900 streambed, thus eliminating millions in mitigation costs). This would also allow the Wild Oats Canyon access road from Brooktrails to go forward, giving most of Brooktrails a safe emergency exit, reduced traffic, faster access to the bypass and ability to avoid central town for trips south or north.

128-3 Caltrans should formally address this alternative for a 2-lane, ELSIE version bypass, and include this proposal in the final EIS/EIR . You are legally obligated to address "whatever the community says is significant".

Cher Daniels
Caltrans Chief of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr
Sacramento, Ca 95833
Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Sincerely,
John LeFan
Brooktrials resident

John LeFan

128-1 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of a two-lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need for the project. See response to Comment 34-15 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning) which explains the 1998 Value Analysis Report, particularly the fact that detailed traffic studies had not been completed at the time the value analysis workshop was conducted.

128-2 The L/C ("ELSIE") route is a combination of the southern segment of Alternative LT and the northern segment of Alternative C1T. General Response 1.3 discusses why Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration and General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road. Any of the bypass alternatives would remove traffic from local roads and allow southbound or northbound travelers to avoid the central city.

128-3 See responses to Comments 128-1 and 128-2. Also, regarding addressing public concerns, see response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff) and 131-16 (Michael Lightrain), which discusses the extensive public involvement in the development of the bypass project, which was critical in developing the alternatives that were considered in the DEIS/EIR. See also Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) concerning public involvement since circulation of the DEIS/EIR, which was crucial in modifying Alternative J1T to respond to local concerns. Caltrans and FHWA will continue coordination efforts throughout final design and construction of the project.

129 John and Betty Lemmer

25224 Poppy Drive
Willits, CA 95490-9432
(707)-459-6342
jlemmer@cwia.com
June 27, 2002

Ms. Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833

Subject: Willits Bypass on US-101

We would like to register our thoughts regarding the proposed Willits bypass alignment.

129-1 We oppose any route that would use the Quail Meadows interchange due to the adverse affect on surface traffic in the vicinity of the Willits High School and Sherwood Road.

The Truck Scales interchange is much preferred for the northerly termination of this project due to the beneficial effects on surface traffic flow. This is the C1T alignment, at least in the northern reaches of this project.

129-2 In addition, this alignment will remove the requirement for an overpass over the railroad, eliminate a railroad/highway 101 grade crossing and facilitate any future extension of a 4 lane freeway project north of the termination of this project.

129-3 Any perceived adverse environmental effects from this alignment can be addressed by a separate restoration project. The proposed Willits Creek Restoration Project should resolve all the perceived problems with the C1T alignment. This project is also apparently supported by the California Department of Fish and Game. In this way, the environment both for fish and people will be enhanced.

129-4 With regard to the southern and middle portion of this project, it does appear that the L1T alignment will best facilitate any future interchanges with surface streets – especially with East Commercial Street. This is particularly important for the traveler related facilities along Commercial Street including the Skunk Train Depot, the Mendocino County Historical Museum, the Mendocino County Library, the Mendocino County Railroad History Project (under construction), Recreation Grove Park (the site of many regional exhibitions and events), the youth baseball and soccer fields, and the rodeo grounds.

129-5 In summary, our opinion is that the best alignment would be to use L1T from the south to its proximity to the C1T alignment and then C1T as planned. Please be responsive to the expressed desire of the residents and elected representatives of the people.

Thank you for consideration of our views,

John E. Lemmer Betty J. Lemmer

129-1 See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

129-2 The comment accurately points out that the northern portion of Alternative C1T does not require crossing the Northern Pacific Railroad tracks and that, in fact, it eliminates an at-grade railroad crossing for U.S. 101. The at-grade crossing would remain in place, but existing U.S. 101 at the crossing would become a county road.

Caltrans does not believe the alternative would facilitate an extension of the freeway to the north. The existing right of way north of the conform point is probably not wide enough to accommodate a freeway. In addition, there are several private driveways that connect to the existing highway, so a frontage road would also be required. Extension of a freeway on the east side of the existing highway would require impacting Outlet Creek and its riparian habitat. Impacting established riparian habitat and a stream bearing migrating salmonids would not be undertaken without great difficulties. Extending the freeway with a railroad crossing on

the north end of C1T (on the west side of the existing highway) would require impacting the railroad or constructing a railroad crossing at a narrow skew, which would require a lengthy bridge and would be expensive.

129-3 See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

129-4 See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project on any of the valley alternatives.

129-5 See General Response 1.3 for a discussion of why Alternative C1T and hybrid Alternative L/C do not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria and, therefore, were eliminated from consideration as preferred alternative candidates.

130 Monty Levenson

Monty H. Levenson, P.O. Box 294, Willits, CA 95490

Tel. (707) 459-3402 • *FAX* (707) 459-3434 • *E-Mail:* monty@shakuhachi.com

August 23, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Office of Environmental Management S-1
Department of Transportation (Caltrans)
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive
Sacramento, CA 95833
ATT: Nancy Mackenzie

Dear Ms. Daniels,

I am a resident and property owner living outside the city of Willits since 1970 during which time I have operated a local business and raised a family. All of my four children attended Willits public schools and my wife and I have been involved in a number of community-oriented endeavors.

Naturally, the proposed freeway bypass around our town is of vital interest to myself, my family and our neighbors since all of us would be severely impacted by a public works project of this magnitude. I attended Caltrans' Open House in Willits as well as several of the public hearings and community meetings designed to inform our community about the bypass. I came to these events with an open mind, studied the alternatives and listened to the opinions of experts and concerned citizens of Willits and Mendocino County.

Here are some of my thoughts on the matter:

130-1 1. I was a bit shocked to read in Caltrans' EIR/EIS that the Willits Bypass was deemed to have *no significant environmental impact* on our area. Is it possible that a $130 million, 65-foot wide, miles long stretch of freeway through the pristine Little Lake Valley could be assesed to have such a benign effect? That conclusion alone cast some doubts in my mind as to the honesty and sincerity, if not the technical proficiency, of your analysis. I wonder how you managed to come to such an astounding conclusion.

2. Some of the crucial economic and environmental issues raised by this project that are of great concern to me include the following:

130-2 • The potentially devastating effects on our local business community along Highway 101-Main Street as expressed by our former County Supervisor, John Pinches at a recent meeting of the Willits City Council. Willits derives much of its income from visitors passing through town via US 101. Restaurants, motels and other tourist-related industries that sustain our local economy would be severely impacted by the proposed bypass. I am very concerned about the inevitable influx of large corporate, out -of-state businesses the will sprout along the freeway interchanges. The last thing our struggling Willits economy needs is to have locally-owned

130-1 The reader is referred to Section S.7 (DEIS/EIR, page S-11) Adverse Environmental Effects that Cannot be Avoided if the Project is Implemented, which discusses impacts to various resources that would remain, even after mitigation measures are implemented.

130-2 The Economic Impact Report anticipates that some businesses located along the existing alignment of U.S. 101, specifically, those businesses that derive customers primarily from through traffic would see some reduction in sales as traffic is reduced on Main Street, as a result of the proposed bypass. But westbound travelers will still need to use south Main Street (the Miracle Mile) to access the Main Street/S.R. 20 intersection, for any of the valley alternatives.

However, the reduction in business under Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative) would be compensated for in the short-term by anticipated construction expenditure. In the long-term, the City of Willits' economic development policies are expected to combine with the decrease in traffic through the middle of the City to result in improved business conditions in the City. The impact on sales tax revenue is expected to be either imperceptible or positive.

businesses replaced by minimum wage jobs these franchised establishments offer in return.

130-3 • A significant increase in far-reaching, high decibel noise throughout the Willits Valley that would accompany the construction of a high-speed roadway.

130-4 • Highway safety and the inevitable increase in serious and fatal accidents on this proposed freeway — a likelihood that is statistically assured. Access to the US 101 corridor by fire and other emergency vehicles would be diminished by having to enter through interchanges on the north and south ends of town and the time taken to arrive at the scene of an accident significantly increased.

130-5 • I am deeply concerned about the environmental impacts on last remaining stand of old-growth valley oak woodlands as well as the endangered species of grass and wildlife in the northern wetlands area of the valley. Caltrans' proposal to move a tremendous volume of soil from Oil Well Hill to bring the freeway level up to that of the existing railroad tracks (approximately forty feet high) staggers the imagination. An increase in traffic, noise and pollution, which accompany the building of this bypass, would negatively impact the environmental quality of our valley and its surrounding area during and after its construction for years to come.

130-6 • Conversion of agricultural land to other uses and the visual impact of the proposed freeway. The continued erosion and sacrifice of precious Ag land throughout the state is already having irremediable consequences for the future.

130-7 • Very few, if any of these effects on the environment, to my mind, are effectively addressed or significantly mitigated by measures proposed in your agency's EIR.

130-8 3. The rather inflexible attitude Caltrans has taken in remaining open to a two-lane alternative which, in the past, was suggested by your department. Nearly all of the comments presented at the public meetings I attended were in support of the two-lane alternative. Your own statistics prove that the two-lane roadway is sufficient to handle projected traffic densities far into the future. My own opinion is that even this more modest proposal is excessive and unnecessary. Once again, Caltrans' own traffic studies established that over two-thirds of peak-hour congestion on Hwy 101-Main Street is made up of vehicles driven by *local Willits residents*. A freeway bypass would hardly resolve this problem which is better addressed by opening alternative routes within the city proper. Furthermore, your agency's own studies indicate that present and projected traffic densities north of Willits will remain very low far into the future. Are all the unimaginable burdens on our pocketbooks and to our environment worth the cost so traffic can get through town a few minutes faster? I think not. Is everybody in such a hurry to get to the Drive-Thru Tree in Leggett?

130-9 4. The very high price tag in taxpayer dollars that the Willits Bypass would cost. $100 to $130 million would be better spend developing cost-effective, non-polluting, forward-thinking alternative such as the development of light rail from the Bay Area to our northern rural counties and local alternatives that more effectively deal with the issues at hand.

130-10 The list goes on, however, I will stop here. You have no doubt heard all of this before. It is my opinion that the Willits Bypass, if built, will not only denigrate the quality of life in our community, but also fail to solve any of the important transportation issues it was designed to address. This proposed solution is unimaginative and regressive at best. It represents a "rubber-stamp" approach to

130-3 There are many factors that have an effect on noise propagation over distance. Traffic noise levels drop at a rate of 4.5 dB per doubling distance, from 50 ft. to 100 ft.; 100 ft. to 200 ft.; 200 ft. to 400 ft. and so on. Meteorological conditions play a major role on the effects of noise over distance. Wind, temperature gradients, rain, and humidity can influence overall noise conditions by either reducing or increasing the noise at distant locations. Given all this information it is likely at times that noise from any alternative constructed as well as the existing U.S. 101 and S.R. 20 may be heard throughout the valley. However, noise levels would not exceed impact thresholds.

130-4 Safety is more easily assured on a freeway with safety features like full shoulders, a median and interchanges rather than at-grade intersections and few, if any, pedestrian and bicycle conflicts. The time for emergency vehicles required to arrive at a collision scene on the proposed facility would not theoretically increase since there will be no congestion or at-grade intersections for response vehicles to maneuver.

130-5 Modified Alternative J1T was selected as the LEDPA because it has the least overall environmental harm of any of the proposed build alternatives. Modified Alternative J1T avoids the riparian oak woodland referred to in the comment. Modified Alternative J1T avoids impacts to Glandular western flax (*Hesperolinon adenophyllum*) and Baker's navarretia (*Navarretia leucocephala* ssp. *bakeri*) both California Native Plant Society (CNPS) List 1B species. Modified Alternative J1T impacts to Baker's meadowfoam (*Limnanthes bakeri)* is similar to that of Alternative J1T.

Alternatives J1T, Modified J1T, and LT would require large volumes of embankment for the grade separation at the railroad. Alternative C1T does not cross the railroad, and thus, can maintain a lower profile. The extra length, however, of Alternative C1T would require considerable fill and the total earthwork is similar to that of the other valley alternatives. Alternative E3 would not use Oil Well Hill as a borrow source.

Appendix A (FEIS/EIR) lists mitigation measures that are proposed to avoid, minimize, rectify, reduce, and compensate for impacts during and after construction of the project.

130-6 Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts to agricultural land and visual quality. See Appendix A (FEIS/EIR). See also response to Comment 48-1 (Andrea Beene) regarding erosion.

130-7 Caltrans/FHWA are confident in the adequacy of the DEIS/EIR as a document of disclosure and for providing the necessary information to make a decision on the project. See General Response 1.11.

130-8 A bypass is primarily designed to improve the flow of interregional traffic; however, a recognized benefit of a bypass is that it removes interregional traffic from local roads. This improves local traffic conditions. Alternate routes on local streets would not remove interregional traffic. Also, see responses to Comments 32-1 (Save All the Valley Eternally), 34-15 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning), and 150-4 (Jacqueline Morninglight). See General Response 1.10, which discusses why a two-lane alternative is not being considered because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

130-9 The comment is noted.

130-10 The alternatives presented in the DEIS/EIR were included for consideration precisely because traffic studies for these alignments shows that they meet the purpose of the project. The project required extensive technical studies and public involvement. See response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff) and 131-16 (Michael Lightrain) regarding the public involvement in the development of the bypass project, which was critical in developing the alternatives that were considered in the DEIS/EIR. See also Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) concerning public involvement since circulation of the DEIS/EIR, which was crucial in modifying Alternative J1T to respond to local concerns. Caltrans and FHWA will continue coordinating with Willits throughout final design and construction of the project.

The preferred alternative for construction is Modified Alternative J1T (General Response 1.3 and Chapter 2, FEIS/EIR). The no-build alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project and would not meet its objectives.

130-11 Caltrans and FHWA appreciate your taking time to comment on the project and the DEIS/EIR. Again, see response to Comment 130-10.

sensitive and complex issues that have been cynically simplified by big money interests who stand to profit from its implementation. If the California Department of Transportation lives up to its name, your agency should be open to a larger, more
130-10 imaginative and innovative vision for the future than the Willits Bypass represents. There is absolutely no reason to push ahead with this project given the costs and devastation it would bring to our community and I urge you to adopt the "No Build" alternative.

In all honesty, I do not have any great hopes in the regard, but humbly (and perhaps
130-11 naively) implore you to listen to the voice of a growing constituency of concerned citizens who reside in and around our beautiful Willits Valley.

Sincerely,

Monty H. Levenson

131 Michael Lightrain

131-1 Comment noted. The need for the bypass is discussed in Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR).

131-2 Comment noted. Improving the road system to efficiently and safely move interregional traffic is an objective of the project. While the proposed bypass will improve local traffic by removing interregional traffic off of Main Street, improving local traffic is not the purpose of the project.

131-3 Comment noted. Refer to Sections 5.5.5 and 5.10.4 of the DEIS/EIR for water quality and visual resources measures. Section 5.11 of the DEIS/EIR discusses the traffic noise analysis, which concluded that noise abatement is not required. However, Caltrans will investigate using quiet-pavement technologies, including open-graded asphalt.

August 26, 2002

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Maiser Khaled, Cheif
District operations-North
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Dear Ms. Daniels and Mr. Khaled:

I have reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR for the Willits Bypass, and given lots of attention to trying to grasp what this project encompasses. In commenting on the Willits Bypass Project, my ideas, and opinions are stated from the position that:

131-1 1) The Bypass is needed, and should be built as quickly as is reasonable.

131-2 2) Caltrans must design the best possible road system, one that safely moves regional traffic, at the same time it improves the present local traffic patterns.

131-3 3) The new roadway must express great respect for the enviroment it passes through, in all ways reasonable. This means it will be built with mitigations to limit noise and headlight emissions, and to prevent water-course pollution.

131-4 4) The Bypass should be designed to enhance the Willits Community through putting the interchanges in the best locations that will benefit the City, and the State should purchase conservation easements at the interchanges, to prevent commercial sprawl.

131-5 5) Rather than trying to truncate this stretch of Freeway, the roadway should have curves, and other features that slow traffic flow to 55, as it passes around Willits.

131-6 6) It may be very reasonable to incorporate a two-lane Expressway for the Northern one-half of the Bypass, to reduce cost, and to not overbuild the needs of the 101 road system.

131-4 The locations of the proposed interchanges were determined to meet the purpose and need for this project serving interregional traffic (Chapter 2, DEIS/EIR). The interchanges were not specifically designed to enhance the Willits community; however, moving interregional traffic off of Main Street will enhance the community by reducing congestion. See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

131-5 In view of the importance of U.S. 101 as a primary arterial focus route, as the life-line north-south route through coastal Northern California, and as a major commercial route, the design speed of any proposed facility serving as U.S. 101 should meet the recommendations of the *Highway Design Manual*. For limited access highways in rural areas, this is at least 110 km/h, or about 70 mph.

131-6 General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

My prefered alternative for the Willits Bypass, is a combination of LT and C1T, with some important modificaitons.

131-7 7) The Freeway would be sited to avoid going through the "Oak Forest" that lives between East Hill Road, and the intersection of Center Valley and Bray Road. An Oak Forest of this type is very rare in this area, and it needs to be preserved, even though there are many of these species of tree scattered about. This avoidance can be done by realignment of some of Center Valley, and Bray Road.

131-8 8) In crossing the Little Lake Valley, the Freeway surface should be built as close to the valley floor as possible, so that all crossroads are bridged over the Freeway. This will allow for noise, and headlight emisssion mitigations. Elevating the Freeway, as presently proposed, would be a sound disaster for the Willits community.

131-9 9) Highway 20 should connect with the 101 Freeway in the area of the Valley Southwest of the junction of Center Valley, and Bray Road. This should be a confined On/Off Interchange, that routes traffic to the West, bridging the railroad tracks, Railroad Avenue, and Baechtal Creek, to discend onto an exit area just East of the intersection of Highway 20, and South Main Street. This Exit would connect with the present road just East of the space between 'Coast To Coast', and 'Safeway'. Because this would be the junction of the 101 Freeway and Highway 20, and The Central Willits Exit, this type of Exit/Extension would be very functional, even though the Interchange/Exit was some distance from the Freeway.

Such an interchange would limit commercial development and sprawl in the Valley. Its construction would cause some street widening, to four lanes, of the area between the East side of the 'Coast to Coast' parking lot, and Main Street. This can be easily done at this time because of the vacancy on the 'Safeway' corner. Also, 'Coast to Coast' would need to be moved, or put through some changes, and one or two houses to the East of the parking lot would need to be removed.

131-10 10) The Northern interchange should be located near the area at which the Railroad Tracks cross Highway 101. This interchange should interact with North Main Street, and the future Brooktrails Expressway. The Railroad Tracks should be bridged, due to the Brooktrails traffic that will use this interchange.

131-11 11) A new elevated bridge should be built over Outlet Creek. This would allow a Frontage Road to be built along the West side of the tracks to service local traffic between the North Willits Interchange, and Reynolds Highway. This extension of North Main Street would cross over the track just South of the Outlet Creek Bridge, and use this bridge to connect to Reynolds Highway. With a lane barrier added, the present road would function as a two lane Expressway, that would not have the present driveway connections. Building this relatively simple Frontage Road would avoid the major impacts proposed for this area in Alternative E3.

131-7 See General Response 1.3, which explains why Alternative L/C is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative. Impacts to the oak riparian forest referred to in the letter will be minimized by the construction of Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative), which was designed to avoid impacts to a number of resources including the oak riparian forest.

131-8 The freeway crosses over the local roads for several reasons. The existing local roads appear to be near, or in some cases below, the 100-year flood elevations. To have the local roads cross over the freeway, the local roads would need to be elevated higher than the freeway, which needs to be elevated above the 100-year flood elevation.

Elevating local roads creates difficult grade issues with driveways for residents nearest the overcrossings. For example, the residents along Hearst-Willits Road for either C1T or LT would have an elevated roadway in front of their homes, and reconnecting driveways would present problems.

In addition, having East Hill Road cross J1T would require a grade separation over the railroad, pushing East Hill Road higher still. (Clearance over railroad tracks must be more than over a roadway.) And if the design called for elevating the local roadways over the freeway for Alternative LT, not only would Center Valley and Hearst-Willits roads need to be elevated, so would Bray Road where it connects. This would create elevated tee intersections, which could present safety issues.

Finally, if the local roads in the floodway were elevated to cross over the freeway, they would need to be built solely on structures; approach fills, which are typical for overcrossings, could not be used because they would represent obstructions in the floodway.

131-9 A center valley interchange is beyond the scope of this project to move through traffic on U.S. 101 out of the City (see General Response 1.9). Alternative E3, which included an S.R. 20 interchange, was eliminated from consideration as a LEDPA because of its overall environmental harm (General Response 1.3).

131-10 The suggestion does not appear to be different from the proposed Truck Scales Interchange (on Alternatives C1T and L/C), except for the railroad grade separation. See response to Comment 131-7.

131-11 The comment appears to propose extending North Main Street as a frontage road to serve parcels west of the railroad tracks and north of Truck Scales Interchange to Outlet Creek. From there, the frontage road would cross the railroad tracks and connect to U.S. 101, which would be reconstructed on the proposed new bridge across Outlet Creek. All of these proposed changes add cost to the project, which is already over the allocated amount for all alternatives. In addition, the proposal does not address the need and purpose of the project, and thus will not be considered.

131-12 12) If a Valley route is used, and Caltrans continues to insist on only a Southern, and Northern Interchange, the South Interchange should be sited to an area just South of East Hill Road. The Interchange would have a connection road to Main Street, just South of Margie Drive. A frontage road should also connect this interchange to East Hill Road. Again, I believe that two exits are not satisfactory, and that, all things considered, three exits will create the best, and safest traffic patterns, whether the Freeway passes to the East, or West side of Willits.

Considerations for Alternative E3.

131-13 13) If Alternative E3 is to be built, the Northern Interchange needs to connect with Sherwood Road, as well as Main Street. The section North of this interchange should connect with the existing Highway just North of the railroad crossing, and implement the Frontage Road described in Sec.11. This will reduce the intrusion of the Freeway into the residences West of the railroad track.

131-14 14) The Highway 20 Interchange needs to be sited as close to Willits City Limits as possible, rather than by the railroad crossing/KOA Kampground. North of this interchange, the Freeway should be routed just West of Mill Creek Drive, after crossing Exley Lane area, as the Mill Creek Canyon will likely evolve into a Parkland. This can be done by cutting the roadbed into the hills on each side of the Canyon, and using accoustic dampening and bass traps on the bridge.

131-15 15) Whether the Freeway passes East or West of Willits, the most important consideration for safety is, that bicycles be separated from cars and trucks, not just managed to the right side of the Freeway. This Community is trying diligently to create bicycle pathways. I strongly recommend that bike and walking paths parallel the Freeway, and if they use Freeway bridges, that a separation barrier be installed. Doing this can easily save someones life, and will prevent injuries.

My best wishes and support goes out to the Caltrans Willits Bypass Design Team in creating the best road system possible. Please call me if you want clarificaiton, or need solutions, and perspective to problems that emerge from design changes emerging from the E1S/E1R Review process.

Yours for a better world,

Michael Lightrain

Michael Lightrain

131-12 See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project on any of the valley alternatives.

131-13 Caltrans investigated truncating Alternative E3, but the grades are prohibitive. After the public comment period for the DEIS/EIR, Alternative E3 was eliminated from consideration for a number of reasons, including its impact to at least 133 homes and businesses. See General Response 1.3.

131-14 Caltrans believes the alignment described in the comment is very close to the previously rejected Alternative D (Section 3.6, DEIS/EIR). This alternative will not be revisited.

131-15 The standard outside shoulder is adequate for bicyclists or for pedestrians (probably limited to stranded motorists) using the freeway facility. Physical separation of the few bicyclists and pedestrians that might use the road is not warranted. Safety is more easily assured on a freeway with safety features like full shoulders, a median and interchanges rather than at-grade intersections and few, if any pedestrian and bicycle conflicts. Additionally, bicyclists and pedestrians will have the option of traveling through Willits in lieu of using the bypass.

131-16 See General Response 1.11 regarding adequacy of DEIS/EIR; Appendix A (FEIS/EIR) regarding mitigation measures; and General Response 1.10 regarding two-lane alternative. The public was provided a 60-day comment period ending August 10, 2002. The comment period was extended another two weeks to August 26 to give the public additional time to review the DEIS/EIR. Further, Sections 2.4 History of Planning and Scoping Process, 3.6 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated from Further Study, and 10.5 Public Outreach of the DEIS/EIR detail the history of the project development process and the extensive public involvement that provided the community a role in the decision-making process. No further response is necessary and no revision to the DEIS/EIR is required.

131-16

The Period For Public Input Needs To Be Expanded

Before Caltrans closes off Public discussion and comment of the Willits Bypass Project, substantial changes in the presentation of the Projects proposals are needed. This includes incorporating into the EIS/EIR, very pertinent information concerning Unavoidable Significant Impacts to the Enviroment. The Report needs to give greater consideration to the relevant merits, and value, of 2-Lane Expressway/Freeway alternatives being intigrated into options under consideration. Additional mitigations that are innovative, and more practical than some presented in the current EIS/EIR, are also entitled to inclusion, and review by the Public.

Presently, the EIS/EIR is an inadequate, sketchy, and deficient proposal. It does not give clarity to the impacts of the potential routes, adequately solve all the problems that the Project encompasses, nor state a preferred alternative. Most importantly, it does not present a clear picture of the project to the Public, so that the Public can feel comfortable with proposals that will be acted on. The present EIS/EIR is flawed to the point that it will not provide adequate guidance to those empowered to manage the growth of the Project, after it's closed to Public input. It needs major revisions, before it can have the credibility of representing what Caltrans wants to build.

The Caltrans Planning Team is intrusted with responsibility of growing a open, beneficial relationship with this Community, one that supports the Project goals toward finding the best solution for traffic flow, road route, interchange design, bridge styling, and most importantly, the Enviroment. In the spirit of this trust, the Public deserves the opportunity to respond to a fully developed, and comprehensive picture, of what can be done to create a successful Project. The EIS/EIR needs to be presented in an expanded, clearer, and more complete proposal that includes the ideas, and challenges, of the Public responding to the present document.

I respectfully request that the Willits Bypass EIS/EIR be revised, and again submitted to the Public for review, and comment. In conjunction with this process, I request that Caltrans host another Public Forum to discuss the improved EIS/EIR with the Community, followed by a Public Hearing, to be held before the Final EIS/EIR is completed, and the process is closed to Public input. I believe that this modification of the Freeway Development process, beyond the present criteria, will increase the projects credibility, through providing a much clearer picture of the intentions of Caltrans, including the "Unavoidable Significant Impacts", and it will reduce the potential for lawsuits, and other measures, slowing the progress of the projects completion. Most importantly this will build the foundation for a better Project, with a wider base of acceptance. In fact, it will help to grow the project into providing the best possible Roadway System for the Little Lake Valley.

Sincerely,
Michael Lightstrain

132 Charles Lindelef and Trisha Benedict

132-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. See General Response 1.3 which explains why Alternative E3 is not the LEDPA/Preferred Alternative.

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Trisha Benedict
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August 14, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
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Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Envioronmental Coordinator

Dear Ms.Daniels:

We attended the open house Caltrans sponsored in Willits presenting the proposed alternatives for a Highway 101 bypass around Willits and have studied the environmental impact report at the Willits library. As residents of Brooktrails, we have listened to the views of all members of the community. We were favorably impressed with Caltrans' presentations and workpapers. It is obvious that much effort has gone into the planning for this project.

132-1 There are really only two viable options: A bypass selected from one or more of Caltrans' routes east of Willits or alternative E3, which takes the bypass west of town. Our perspective is that of Californians who moved to the Willits area four years ago, so our concerns are for all users of Highway 101 as well as for the community of Willits. We favor E3 for the following reasons:

- Only E3 connects well with Highway 20. All other alternatives bring through traffic into town to wait at the same traffic light that now backs up coast-bound traffic. The bottleneck will still exist.
- All the eastern alternatives cut through the Little Lake Valley on great mounds of dir or ungainly viaducts disseminating noise that cannot be mitigated and destroying much rural land that now is a precious resource for the community. E3 does not bisect the community.
- Because E3 balances cuts with fills, no great hole in a hillside will need to be made t supply fill dirt for the freeway. More important, when the road is in a cut, less noise reaches the community.
- The controversy over the Quail Meadows interchange is moot if E3 is the choice.
- E3 will facilitate a connection to Brooktrails above the steep-graded portion of Sherwood road eliminating the need for Brooktrails residents to pass through the center of town when their destination is Ukiah and points south. Such a connection would be a life-saver in the event of a disaster, such as a fire.

132-2 Comment noted.

132-1, cont.

- The Caltrans study shows that E3 is the safest alternative.
- E3 takes traffic up around Willits through the hills. While we regret the habitat disruption that will result and sympathize with those whose property will be affected, we believe that the net losses of wetlands, farmland and community peace would be greater were any of the eastern alternatives selected. The finished bypass on the western route will itself be something to enjoy and be proud of. The future of Willits is linked with tourism. A well-crafted route through our hills will enhance Highway 101 as well as clearing the town of big trucks just passing through.

132-2 With suitable modifications (e.g. elimination of a Quail Meadows interchange) any of the Caltrans alternatives will enhance the Willits environment for the residents and for the merchants. Garberville is a thriving community; Cloverdale is a place at which we often stop because it is much more serene with the freeway bypass. We would like to thank Caltrans for the professional quality of the study as well as for their patience, and wish for an effective Willits bypass as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

CHARLES G. LINDELEF
TRISHA BENEDICT

cc: Maiser Khaled, Chief, District Operations- North Federal Highway Administration
Editor, TheWillits News

133 David Lisle

133-1 See response to Comment 114-1 (Roland Hulstein).

133-2 See response to Comment 114-2 (Roland Hulstein).

133-3 See response to Comment 114-3 (Roland Hulstein).

133-4 See response to Comment 114-4 (Roland Hulstein).

133-5 See response to Comment 114-5 (Roland Hulstein).

David Lisle
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707 456-9550

August 3, 2002

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Maiser Khaled, Chief
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Dear Ms. Daniels and Mr. Khaled:

133-1 As a resident of Willits, California, I'm writing to express my concerns over Caltrans' proposed Willits Bypass. At a recent citizens' awareness meeting I learned that the Environmental Impact Report for the project failed to address several very important issues regarding both our human environment and the protection of our natural environment.

133-2 I wish to go on record as opposing any four-lane highway project, since I believe that your own statistics show that a two-lane bypass would be completely adequate to handle projected traffic. In fact, two lanes would be operating at only 50% capacity in the year 2028.

133-3 In addition, the two-lane bypass could easily follow the natural contours of the valley and avoid the destruction of endangered species. Non-freeway speeds would keep noise levels significantly lower, and avoiding the use of elevated roadways would keep the visual degradation of the project to an unavoidable minimum.

133-4 Lastly, a two-lane bypass could allow several exits into the extended Willits community to make the entire project far more useful to the residents it is most likely to impact. Since the four-lane project would have no access into town or into the Brooktrails area, it would seriously damage tourist- based business, and any traffic headed for Fort Bragg on Highway 20 would still need to come through Willits. The fact that a two-lane project would also be vastly less expensive should also be a major consideration in its favor.

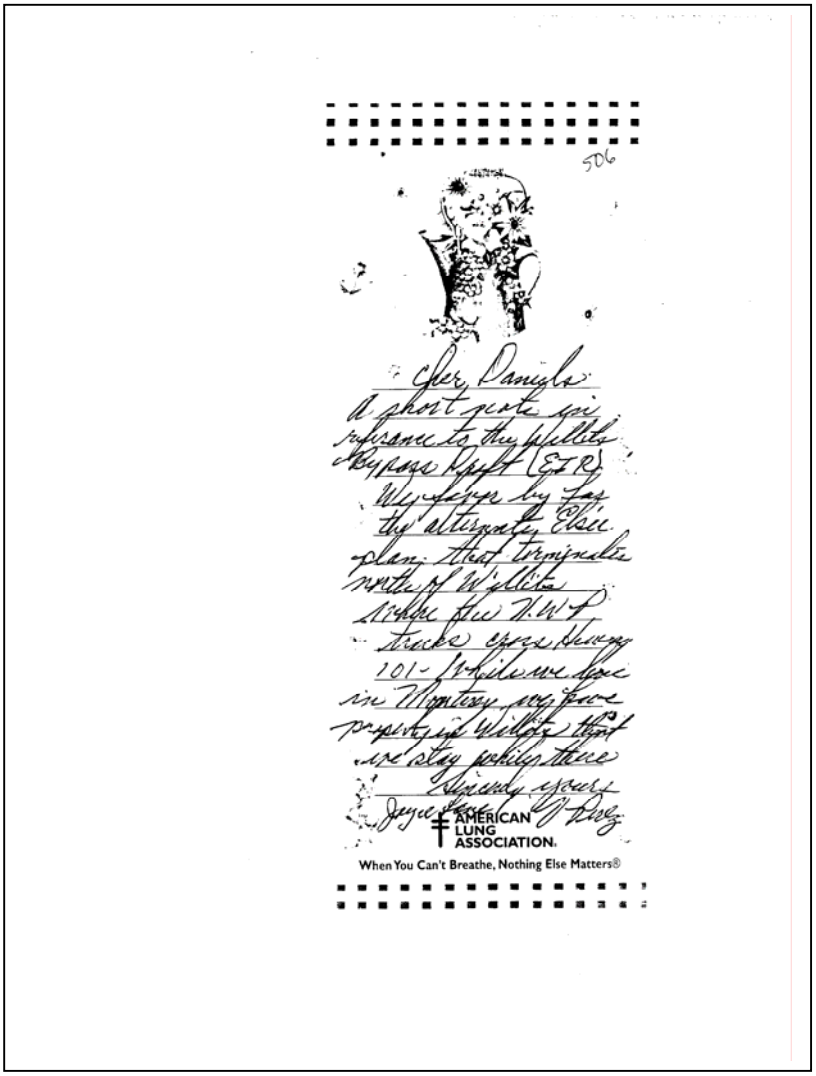
133-5 Please refer to letters written by Richard Estabrook, Ellen Drell, David Drell, Christopher Martin, and Hal Wagenet for more complete arguments. I support their excellent work and hope to hear that you support our desire to keep our community healthy and beautiful for many years to come.

Sincerely,

David Lisle

134 Joyce Lane

134-1 See General Response 1.3 regarding the L/C Alternative.



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Dear Daniels

A short note in reference to the Wilbur Bypass Draft (EIR)

We favor by far the alternative Else plan that terminates north of Wilbur under the N.W.P. tracks over Highway 101 - for like we have in Monterey, we have property in Wilbur that we stay paying there

Sincerely yours

Joyce Lane

AMERICAN LUNG ASSOCIATION.

When You Can't Breathe, Nothing Else Matters®