178 Millie Sanchez

178-1 General Response 1.10 explains why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

08/22/2002

178-1 This is to urge Caltrans to continue with the **4 lane bypass** plan which is being considered. To build a 2 lane bypass would probably not alleviate much of the congestion and the aggravation caused by slow moving traffic which is evident every day of the week. Drivers who are going through town are impatient and sometimes irresponsible and the local drivers impatient, irresponsible AND disgusted with the many years the project is taking.

To survey, study (which has gone on and on for 40 years), write environmental reports, plan, engineer and build a 2 lane bypass will not cost half the price of a 4 lane bypass done now. It is inevitable that with the growth of the state, and this area, a 4 lane freeway will be necessary. To rebuild a freeway, all of the above will be done over, present roads torn up, more inconvenience (witness the existing roadwork between Ukiah and Willits) and the costs will have risen to ????.

Please don't waste more dollars,

M. Sanchez

179 Donna Schindel

Donna Schindel
PO Box 1376
Willits, CA 95490
August 6, 2002

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

Dear Ms. MacKenzie

179-1 **Please listen to the people of Willits!** The elected officials of the City of Willits, Brooktrails, the Mendocino County Supervisors and the agencies that serve us here, Mendocino County Sheriff, Willits Police Department, Mendocino Emergency Service Authority, Emergency Medical Services, California Department of Forestry, Little Lake Fire Department, Brooktrails Fire Department and the Willits Unified School District all support the **ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon Bypass.** (Alternate LT in the south + Alternate C1T in the north, connecting to Wild Oat Canyon at the Truck Scales Interchange) The City of Willits supports the **Willits Creek Restoration.**

These agencies and many others have worked together to reach a consensus that could be the solution to many of the problems we face here. The **ELSIE** alternative impacts the least amount of residences, businesses and agricultural land. It requires less importation of fill material and eliminates the need to cross a railroad line. The **Willits Creek Restoration** will recreate the natural channel of Willits Creek, which was destroyed when the railroad was completed.

179-2 A true bypass must be accessible from Brooktrails. This cannot be at Sherwood Road. The intersection at Sherwood Road/US 101 already poses a serious danger to the students of Willits High School and Sanhedrin High School. **Wild Oat Canyon Road/Truck Scales Interchange** is the only logical choice. There must be an alternative evacuation route from Brooktrails in case of a disaster. The City and County support **Wild Oat Canyon Road** as that alternative.

179-1 See response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff) 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. Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) addresses 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 City of Willits and Mendocino County throughout final design and construction of the project.

Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). See also response to Comment 33-4 (Sierra Club, Mendo Lake Group). See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

179-2 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR are true bypasses. The Quail Meadows Interchange, which is north of the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection (Map 6, Vol. 2, DEIS/EIR), would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6.

Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including on existing Route 101 in front of the high school. See General Response 1.8.

179-3 See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

179-4 Caltrans and FHWA appreciate the public's input and involvement on this project. See response to Comment 179-1.

179-5 See responses to Comments 179-1 and 179-3.

179-3 The **Willits Creek Restoration** is only 8% as long as the Caltrans proposed stream realignment. It would return the creek to its original configuration. This would be good for the endangered fish and beneficial to the new Willits Sewer Plant by increasing channel flows. It will improve the quality of the wetland in the valley. Again, this makes sense for everyone, including Caltrans.

179-4 **This community has responded to the call for input on the bypass. We have worked together, in good faith, to see that the least harm to come to our beautiful valley. Caltrans must respond to the reasonable requests of the local citizens and their representatives.**
I am a registered voter and property owner here.
I support the ELSIE/ Wild Oat Canyon Road and the Willits Creek Restoration as the only common sense solution to the Willits Bypass.

Sincerely, Donna Schindel

Donna Schindel

"Trainsinger" <trainsinger@trainsinger.com>
08/07/02 04:21 PM

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

179-5 Dear Ms. MacKenzie,
I support the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon Road alternate for a Willits Bypass. I support the Willits Creek Restoration.
I am a registered voter and property owner here.
Sincerely,
Donna Schindel
PO Box 1376
Willits CA 95490

180 Ed and Erlyne Schmidbauer

180-1 The Haehl Creek Interchange, for the valley alternatives, has been redesigned from a trumpet to a diamond-style interchange. The revision would allow access to the Schmidbauer Ranch from the east side of the interchange through a private road opening in access control.

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

180-2 In order for a historic building to be protected under CEQA or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, it must meet certain specific criteria for the California Register of Historic Places, the National Register of Historic Places, or as an important property under CEQA. These criteria must be met in terms of how significant it is architecturally or historically and whether or not it retains what is called the "integrity" of its original state, that is, whether it retains its original design or materials, among other factors. A qualified Caltrans architectural historian evaluated the Schmidbauer property in 1991. She visited the ranch to record the ranch buildings, conducted an oral history interview with Josephine Schmidbauer, and conducted other historic research on farms in the Willits area. While the house and property have a long history in Willits, she concluded that it does not meet the level of historical or architectural significance required to be eligible for the California and National Registers. In addition, alterations over time have affected its original appearance, so that it no longer meets the technical criterion of "integrity," described above.

A qualified Caltrans architectural historian completed a subsequent review of the initial evaluation of this property in 2000. His review of the documentation concurred with the conclusions in the 1991 evaluation that the Schmidbauer property was not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places and was not a historical resource for the purposes of CEQA, as would be necessary to be considered for avoidance or mitigation.

Ed & Erlyne Schmidbauer
19921 North 101 Hwy.
Willits, CA 95490
707-459-5688

August 4, 2002

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

Dear Ms. Daniels:

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

We own a family ranch south of Willits and East of the 101 Hwy. located at the proposed Haehl Creek inter-change. The Schmidbauer family first bought the ranch in the 1940's. Its rangeland has sustained an operating sheep and cattle operation since that time. Part of the ranch now includes the east portion of the Shafer Ranch. The eastern portion of the Shafer Ranch was left isolated from the balance of the Shafer Ranch when the existing Highway split the ranch. The Schmidbauer Ranch is now approximately 580 acres, about four hundred of those acres being covered by a Williamson Act contract.

180-1 In 1968 Cal-Trans acquired for the proposed Willits freeway bypass, from the Schmidbauer family, a very beautiful part of this ranch. A lovely apple orchard and pasture that surrounded the main house. At that time Cal-Trans entered into an agreement with the Schmidbauer family that when the freeway was built it would allow for access to the ranch at an interchange adjacent to the ranch. Because of reasoning, offered by Cal-Trans, at the time of this agreement, less was paid for the acquired Schmidbauer Ranch property. Cal-Tran's reasoning was that at the time of the freeway completion the Schmidbauer Ranch property would be more valuable because of its access to Highway 101. At the time of the right of way purchase, Cal-Trans constructed on our property, what was to serve as our access road, and put in culverts, graveled the roadway etc. This work caused a lot of erosion damage, which we have spent a considerable amount of money trying to stop. You have not addressed the environmental disaster, which could be, and most probably would be, caused by doing any construction in this highly sensitive soil area at Haehl Creek. . On page 5-55 of the EIR the statement is made that there would be low risk of additional damage to adjacent property. Looking at the past 35 years and the amount of damage done with just a little bit of construction in this Haehl Creek area, how can this statement be true? In addition the amount of money currently being spent by Cal-Trans to deal with erosion damage on the right of way adjacent to our property shows what a problem a much larger scale project will cause. Alternitives C1T,J1T and LT all include the Interchange at this same Haehl Creek area.

180-2 Over the years we have been visited by a horde of people collecting data for the Willits bypass. One of the researchers looking at the historical history of various properties, stated the value of this particular piece of property Historically, should have left it exempt because of the old ranch house, which is 97 years. Many other historical sites have been bypassed in Willits.

180-3 Second you have stated in the EIR that Cal Trans is to pay particular attention to preserving range lands and those lands that are under Williamson Act protection. Yet you very conveniently left that portion of our ranch off of the map,(page 13 of the EIS/EIR Environmental Atlas which shows acreage under Williamson Act contract), at the point were it has been proposed to move Haehl Creek over and encroach on the Schmidbauer Ranch again. Under Appendix L, it is impossible to read the data on the summary of Impacted Williamson Act Contract Lands. This information should be legible and accurate which it is not.

180-4 The planned access for our property separates our property and leaves us without acceptable access, to our property and to that portion of property that lies on the West Side of the proposed Highway project.

180-5 This brief History of our experience with Cal Trans and the freeway bypass for Willits, and the findings stated in the EIR/EIS leaves us feeling that the information is inaccurate and incorrect. Stated under the objectives of the Proposed Action (2.3) the EIR/EIS states that this project will improve the level of service for 101 Hwy. When Cal Trans presented the findings for the bypass alternative's, it has been maintained, that a large part of the traffic congestion in Willits comes from local traffic. How can, having an interchange at Haehl Creek which routes all the truck traffic for Hwy 20 as well as tourist traffic mixed with Brooktrails residents back through Willits going to improve the situation coming into the Hwy 20 turn off? Any of the alternatives using the Haehl Creek interchange will not improve traffic safety, will not reduce delays, will not reduce noise and vibration within the Willits area and will further degrade the quality of all adjoining property's for nothing gained in our community and area. This project would be a waste of taxpayer funds. Any route that does not include a Highway 20 interchange is not going to effectively move traffic on Highway 101 and Highway 20.

180-6 The proposed Floodway Viaduct which would span the Little Lake Valley floodway, with Alternative C1, J1T, and LT is suppose to keep this project from significantly affecting flooding. However you have not mitigated what will be done when the following Impact Thresholds related to floodplain when conditions occur, and they will. Page 5-50, 5.6.3. Conditions within the project area:

*Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on- or off-site;

*Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems;

*Expose people or structures to a substantial risk of propery loss, injury or death involving flooding; or

*Interrupt or terminate a transportation facility, which is needed for emergency vehicles or provides a community's only evacuation route.

Engineering practices, as avoidance or minimization measures rather than actual mitigation measures, is not acceptable. Those are major issues that will occur with the construction of this project. Is this going to be the responsibility of the City of Willits, and the County of Mendocino to deal with the problems?

180-3 The parcels identified as directly impacted by the project are shown on Map 13 (Environmental Atlas). Parcels 104-070-05, 104-090-03, and 104-090-04 are the only parcels directly affected by the project, which are owned by the Schmidbauer family. Parcels 104-120-02, 104,080-03, 104-080-02,104-100-04 are in the Williamson Act program, but are not directly affected by the project. Appendix L (DEIR/EIS) only shows Williamson Act parcels that could be affected by the project. See Volume 3 (FEIS/EIR) for a new copy of this table.

Modified Alternative J1T has been selected as the preferred alternative. This alternative does not include realignment of Haehl Creek at the southerly interchange.

180-4 The Schmidbauer Ranch east of the new freeway would be accessed through the existing access opening at the east side of the Haehl Creek Interchange. The western portion of the ranch would continue to be accessed as it currently is. See response to Comment 180-1.

180-5 See General Response 1.9, which discusses why a center valley interchange is beyond the scope of the proposed bypass project.

180-6 Under both NEPA and CEQA (40 CFR 1508.20 and CEQA Guidelines Sec. 15370), the floodway viaduct is a legitimate mitigation measure that avoids or minimizes impacts upon the floodplain in the project area. Studies for Modified Alternative J1T show that the project would have minimal impact to the existing flood flow pattern(s). Where Modified Alternative J1T would be constructed on embankment, equalizing culverts may be constructed through the embankment at periodic or strategic locations to perpetuate existing flood flow pattern(s). Caltrans drainage design procedures would be implemented to establish other culvert locations to perpetuate existing drainage courses. Other measures to minimize flooding and its effects upon existing or planned storm drain systems may include maximizing vegetated surface cover to promote infiltration, constructing conveyance systems (culverts, ditches, berms, dikes, and swales) to intercept, infiltrate and direct surface flows to a stabilized watercourse, and incorporating infiltration or detention basins to reduce peak discharges.

180-7 The plan does not satisfactorily deal with the botanical resources of the area. Pasture and rangelands, are compromised and damaged when Highway projects introduce undesirable plant species, such as yellow star thistle Pg. 5-62 (5.7.14 Noxious Weeds). It has already been stated in the EIR that no means is sited to mitigate such damage in Mendocino County. This is an unmitigated impact of this project that threatens the surrounding valley. The mitigation for the loss of Oak Trees is ridiculous, planting acorns to replace the loss of one hundred-year-old Oaks is foolish. These are unavoidable, significant impacts to oak woodlands, and are minimized by this EIS/EIR document.

180-8 At the south end of the Willits Valley there are large number of black-tail deer, 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 in the area, access to that acreage and water on the west and East Side of the project.

180-9 Cal-Trans needs to study further the idea of a two-lane alternative which would reduce delays and improve safety and would significantly reduce the visual and noise impacts at a greatly reduced cost to tax payers. Funds might be better spent if they addressed the need for an interchange at Highway 20 and allowed for a north interchange that might connect at sometime to a second, convenient connection for Brooktrails traffic, such as the L-C route supported by many in the community. A second access to Brooktrails needs to be addressed by Cal-Trans and included in any interchanges at the north end of the project.

Sincerely,

Erlyne Schmidbauer

Erlyne Schmidbauer

180-7 Mitigation Measures BIO-23, which lists a number of protection measures that will be implemented in compliance with Executive Order 13112 to prevent the spread of noxious weeds (pg. 5-73, DEIS/EIR), will reduce impacts related to invasive plant species. As stated in the DEIS/EIR, Mendocino County does not allow the use of herbicides, so this method would not be a mitigation component.

Also, Caltrans will coordinate with adjacent ranching operations on landscaping plans to ensure that highway plantings do not interfere with agricultural operations. For example, erosion control seed mixes must not contain invasive plant species, such as vetch, that would compromise pasture and rangeland.

Regarding oak woodlands, see Responses to Comments 26-1 through 26-4 (California Oak Foundation).

180-8 Mitigation Measure BIO-21 (Appendix A FEIS/EIR) addresses wildlife undercrossings. Please also see response to comment 48-4 (Andrea Beene).

180-9 Reducing the four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the bypass by half because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR. See also General Response 1.3 regarding Alternative L/C, General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access, and General Response 1.9 regarding center valley interchange.

181 Jane Selover and David Young

181-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

08/19/2002

To: nancy_mackenzie@dot.ca.gov
Subject: willits bypass

181-1 We would like to express our opinions in favor of the LC option for the Willits Bypass.

Thank you for your consideration.

Jane Selover
David Young

25 Monroe Street
Willits CA 95490

182 Lucy Shido

182-1 Reducing the four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the bypass by half because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR. See Responce to Comment 71 (Lee Davis) regarding the existing two lane roadway in front of Retech.

182-2 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school. See General Response 1.8.

182-3 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 this project.

August 05, 2002 thank you so much for extending input time! I ran out last time! :)

To CALTRANS:
As a resident of Willits, both in the hills and town periodically since 1968, I would like to say how grateful I am that the bypass is becoming a reality. I have had too many dear friends who have met with either a bad accident or death on our streets, largely complicated, I am sure, by the hiway.

My primary concern is how to preserve the integrity of our beauty-full valley with a hiway running through it...

182-1 There is a stretch of 101 south of Ukiah (around RETECH I think is the name?), where it is just two lanes... which works, ~~[illegible]~~... especially if there is a passing area at some point. I would like to request very sincerely that you STRONGLY consider that option here, as a matter of least impact. I know that there have to be emergency shoulders and possibly a safety zone in the middle, inflating even this minimal venture to considerable width... but so much better that twice that!

182-2 I think it would be doing a great disservice to this town if you put an interchange at any degree of closeness to the highschool, where so many of our best and brightest are just beginning to learn the wisdom and patience that being a good driver necessitate. That, in combination with the mass of traffic generated by the community of Brooktrails, makes me greatly in favor of the further north interchange, that would, at some point, hopefully facilitate movement of that population.

182-3 I also think both commuters and our town would profit in having a more direct interchange with hiway #20... if left as is, with only a north and south entry and none to #20, there remains congestion for everyone to deal with...

thank you for your sincere consideration of this public input,

L Shido

Lucy Shido Po Box 1741 Willits CA 95490 (707) 459-2327

183 Barbara Sicard

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

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

I wrote a letter about 8 or 10 years ago expressing what I thought was best for the placement of the freeway. Since then many options have changed so here goes:

We need:

183-1 ELSIE/WILD OAT CANYON LINK ALONG WITH THE WILLITS CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT and a mitigation bank for the issue of Baker's Meadowfoam

183-2 A TWO LANE ROADWAY AROUND WILLITS

183-3 An EXIT ONTO EITHER HWY 20 OR COMMERCIAL STREET

We do NOT need:

183-4 A huge freeway in the valley
A freeway with no access from the center of town
More congestion near Sherwood and by the high school
A freeway going through the center of town as in Eureka
Anything that threatens the viability of the future use of the railroads or their tracks and space around them in town

183-5 WE DO NOT WANT LIT AND THE QUAIL MEADOWS INTERCHANGE UNDERSTAND?

183-6 Save us all some grief and cooperate with those people that live in this area Sincerely

183-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration. Mitigation Measure BIO-11 (pg. 5-69, DEIS/EIR) is proposed to reduce impacts to Baker's meadowfoam.

183-2 General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

183-3 See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project.

183-4 Section 2.2 (DEIS/EIR) explains the need for a bypass of Willits on U.S. 101. 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. Removing U.S. 101 from Willits' Main Street, which runs through the center of town, will improve conditions for pedestrians, bicyclists, and vehicles, as well as improve access to businesses on Main Street. None of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR would conflict with or threaten the viability of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad facility. See response to Comment 80-4 (Ellen Drell).

183-5 Alternative LT does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404 criteria and therefore, is not eligible for construction (General Response 1.3). The Quail Meadows Interchange will be constructed as part of Modified Alternative J1T. See General Response 1.8.

183-6 See response to Comment 179-1 (Donna Schindel).

184 Nayo Dawn Sicard

The following individuals submitted duplicates of this letter:

Sicard, Nayo
Gipson, Jerramy

184-1 Alternative LT does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404 criteria and therefore, is not eligible for construction (General Response 1.3). The Quail Meadows Interchange will be constructed as part of Modified Alternative J1T. Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school and at the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection.

184-2 No railroad right-of-way would be used for construction of the bypass. See response to Comment 80-4 (Ellen Drell). None of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR would threaten the viability of the Northwestern Pacific Railroad facility. See response to Comment 94-2 (Jerramy Gipson).

August 7, 2002

To whom it may concern,

I have lived in the city of Willits for most of my life and have recently purchased a home within the city limits. As both a property owner and a long time resident I am acutely aware of the traffic problems that face this city. I am writing this letter because I think it is high time a bypass was put in to move traffic out of town and make Willits a safer, quieter, prettier, more enjoyable place to live for both residents of the city and the outlying areas.

184-1 I have read the proposals put forth by Caltrans and I feel that the L1T north Quail Meadows interchange is A BAD IDEA. The area in which Caltrans wants the interchange is already a highly congested area as it has both the High School traffic and the Sherwood road traffic (the only road out of Brooktrails to town) coming into town in the same area. At any given time of day this area is backed up and adding additional freeway traffic from a bypass will only make it more dangerous than it already is. While this might 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.

184-2 I also DO NOT support using the railroad land by Sparetime Supply for the freeway. First of all this doesn't accomplish anything for the town of Willits. We will still be stuck with speeding cars, choking exhaust, and TOO MUCH TRAFFIC within the city limits, all of which are things having a BYPASS is supposed to eliminate. Finally, by moving the 101 to the railroad property you are actually moving it into a more residential area thereby endangering more residents than the current monstrosity that cuts straight through the middle of town.

184-3 Having had my say about which proposals I feel will be disastrous to our fair city I would like to now state which proposal makes the most sense for the residents of Willits. It is a FACT that the ELSIE/WILD Oat Canyon and the Willits Creek Restoration bypass proposal is the best one for Willits. 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. What more could you ask for? Well I have an answer to that question. There are two more important things you could do to improve our little town. The first item is give us an off ramp into the middle of town so that Willits businesses could benefit from tourist traffic. Secondly, you could also make the ELSIE/WILD Oat Canyon bypass 2 lanes in each direction instead of 4, as this would keep the environmental impact in the valley to a minimum and would be plenty big enough to accommodate traffic.

184-4 In closing, I realize that the ELSIE/WILD Oat Canyon bypass may take a little more work, a little more thought, and the ability to stand up to a very vocal **minority** but overall it 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,

Nayo Dawn Sicard

Nayo Dawn Sicard

184-3 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR would remove traffic from Willits, thus reducing congestion and improving safety on local streets. Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project.

The proposed bypass is a four-lane facility with two northbound lanes and two southbound lanes, rather than an eight-lane facility as suggested in the comment. If the writer intended to refer to a two-lane facility, General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

184-4 See response to Comment 105-3 (Lawrence and Susan Hammer).

185 Robert Simonson

185-1 See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project.

185-2 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

Any of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road (General Response 1.6).

185-3 General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

186 This number intentionally left blank

"Robert E. Simonson" <bobs@pacific.net>
08/26/2002 10:16 AM
To: Nancy_MacKenzie@dot.ca.gov>
cc:

185-1 Further in connection with my message of Saturday, I failed to mention that I consider off ramps to access Highway 20 and Commercial Street to be very much needed.
Robert E. Simonson P. O. Box 374 Willits, CA 95490

"Robert E. Simonson" <bobs@pacific.net>
08/24/2002 12:32 PM
To: Nancy_MacKenzie@dot.ca.gov>
cc:

185-2 As one of the "silent majority", thank you for the opportunity to express my views on the Bypass proposals and in particular, the very vocal minority who appose any Bypass. As a long time resident of Willits, I have oftened wondered if I would live long enough to actually see a Bypass built. Now there is some hope that it will occur. It has always been my view that something along the original lines would be adopted. The suggestions of late, particularly by Hal Wagonet, are very thoughtful and should be given careful consideration. Rechanneling some of the stream beds to mitigate envirenmental problems is in my view an excellent proposal. This coupled with an interchange near the old truck scales and another access route to Brooktrails makes sense to me.

185-3 On the subject of a two lane versus a four lane Bypass. Anyone who has tried to access 101 at Browns Corner, from either Baechtel Road or Muir Road, knows how dangerous a two lane approach would be. In my view, this would be a serious mistake. Some of the most vocal opponents do not live in town, do not want any development of any kind and have historically opposed anything that would have resulted in more opportunities for people to work and live here. If they had there way, we would be relegated to bicycles and horses for transportation

187 George Sirizzotti

187-1 The Modified Alternative J1T would be constructed as a four-lane facility to meet the purpose and need of the project.

Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species and therefore, is not eligible for construction. General Response 1.3.

See 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for estimated project schedule.

WILLITS, CA. 95490-3016

AUG 16, 02

CHER DANIELS, OFF. OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANGEMENT
CALTRANS DISTRICT 3
2389 GATEWAY OAKS DRIVE
SACRAMENTO, CA 95833

DEAR M'S MACKENZIE:

I HAVE LIVED IN WILLITS ALL OF MY LIFE OF 83 YEARS, AND, BEEN DRIVING THRU THIS MADDENING MESS FOR A LOT OF THOSE YEARS.

187-1 MY RECOMMENDATION, BUILD! BUILD! BUILD!

FORGET THOSE TWO-LANE IDIOTS! EVERY TOWN HAS SOME KNOW IT ALL EXPERTS.

I PREFER THE ELSIE ROUTE. LETS DO IT!

Respectfully
George Sirizzotti

GEORGE SIRIZZOTTI
121 MILL CREEK DRIVE
WILLITS, CA. 95490-3016

188 George Skezas

The following individuals submitted the same form letter or a letter with the same concerns:

Aleshire, Carole
DeBoer, Iris
DeBoer, Arlen
Robie, Richard and Gladys
Skezas, George
Skezas, Zelda

188-1 The hybrid Alternative L/C (Elsie) was eliminated from consideration as a LEDPA due to its overall environmental harm, including adverse impacts to wetlands and to federally listed fish species. See General Response 1.3.

188-2 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road and traffic operations at Quail Meadows Interchange.

8-6-2002

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

Dear Nancy MacKenzie:

I have lived in Brooktrails since 1992 and during that time we have seen the need for a bypass around Willits and an additional exit from Brooktrails relieving the congestion on Sherwood Road.

188-1 After years of discussion, the community at large is solidly behind the construction of a second access that will connect to the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon freeway proposal. This uses the combined alternatives L1 in the south and C1T in the north known as ELSIE. This would connect with a new county road to Brooktrails in Wild Oat Canyon. This combination is:

1. Most Direct
2. Affordable
3. Offers the best service to the entire community and interregional traffic flow.

188-2 QUAIL MEADOWS INTERCHANGE

1. Will increase hazards at the Willits High School
2. Will increase congestion at Sherwood Road and Highway 101
3. Right hand turns off highway 101 cannot be easily made west onto Sherwood Road. Trucks, moving vans, trucks hauling modular homes have a real problem causing slowing and backing up of traffic. I witnessed two trucks, each hauling modular homes trying to turn right from a northern approach on 101. They could not make the turn and keep from crossing the two lines separating traffic.
4. Will increase traffic in central Willits when compared with the Truck Scales interchange.
5. Does not contribute to Willits creek Restoration
6. Does not assist the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant project.
7. Sherwood Road cannot take any additional traffic from the bypass off ramp proposed at the Quail Meadows interchange. Emergency exits to 101 in case of fire or emergency, eliminates Sherwood Road as a rapid exit road. An alternative is urgently needed, and the ELSIE/WILD OAT CANYON FREEWAY proposal building the interchange at the TRUCK scales will be the ideal access to Brooktrails and out Sherwood Road without increasing traffic south into Willits.

ELSIE WILD OAT CANYON PROPOSAL

188-3 This is the answer to the environmental problems on the ELSIE/WILD OAT CANYON PROPOSAL. This uses the combined alternatives L1 to the south and C1T to the north.

188-3 See General Responses 1.4 and 1.5 regarding a Willits Creek restoration and Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant.

188-3 cont.

Mitigation should be considered by way of the WILLITS CREEK RESTORATION proposal.

1. It answers each challenge to the EIR.
2. It enhances the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant and expands wet lands.
3. The EIR study seeks to avoid fishery and wetland impacts insomuch as this restoration plan was ignored at the time Caltrans submitted the EIR to the Federal Government.
4. This proposal recommends connecting Willits Creek to Outlet Creek as it was before the railroad was built, returning the creek to the way nature had it before man came along.
5. The fish are given a bypass of their own.
6. This plan eliminates runoff from the freeway.
7. Enhances the new Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant, which is 1/3rd paid for by Brooktrails. By increasing water flow to meet discharge ratio requirements, water exiting the new treatment plant will be cleaner that the creek water is today.
8. Once the fish are handled, wetland impacts and endangered plants can be solved with a mitigation bank. The environmental objections to ELSIE/WILD OAT CANYON are reduced to a manageable level and local people can get the services they need.

As a Brooktrails resident, I strongly support the ELSIE/WILD OAT CANYON proposal. This was also supported by the Brooktrails Township Board, the City of Willits, all local fire and law enforcement organizations, the Mendocino Emergency Services manager, and the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors. I feel strongly that the bypass should be a 4 LANE FREEWAY and not the two lane alternative proposed by a very vocal minority who believe in zero growth and extreme environmentalism. The vast majority of people in the Willits/Brooktrails area favor the Elsie/Wild Oat Canyon FOUR LANE FREEWAY PROPOSAL. I hope that you would select that proposal along with the Willits Creek Restoration Project as the preferred alternative and get on with the construction of this very important transportation project.

Respectfully,

George Skezas
2119 Poppy Lane
Willits, Ca,. 95490
(707) 459-1876

189 Pat Sloan

189-1 Comment noted. The proposed bypass will improve conditions for motorists on both U.S. 101 and on local roads in the project area, as well as improve access for emergency services vehicles.

June 25, 2002

Dear Cal-Trans,

Regarding Willits, please
189-1 build the road around it, Cal-Trans!

I truly believe it wont be noisy, ugly, and businesses wont fail because of it. I site Garberville as a good example.

I've known Willits for fifty years. The businesses here have always done well.

Also, for safety & tempers. What if minutes could save a life, and an ambulance couldn't get through . . .

There are those who are thinking only of themselves and not for the good of the people.

Please build the freeway Cal-Trans! Thanks for listening.

American Citizen,

Pat Sloan

190 Sheryl Smith

190-1 Any of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR will accommodate a connection for a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6.

190-2 General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

Reducing the four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the bypass by half because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. The footprint of a two-lane bypass would in many instances pose similar visual issues as a four-lane bypass. See also response to Comment 73-5 (Mary Delaney).

190-3 See General Response 1.6 regarding the Brooktrails Township future second access.

190-4 See responses to Comment Letter 35 (Willits Environmental Center).

S. Smith
15555 Hearst Rd.
Willits, CA 95490

July 8, 2002

Dear Cher or Nancy,

190-1 Odds are, you're both very busy. In short, my comments Re: Willits Bypass: 1) overkill – well-designed truck route much more effective – and inviting 2) if we must have a bypass, include an exit near Brooktrails that really works – not only day to day for traffic, but for (God forbid) an emergency – to get all those folks out of the path of rooring [sic] flames or whatever. PLEASE!

Sincerely,
Sheryl Smith

S. Smith
15555 Hearst Rd.
Willits, CA 95490

July 24, 2002
Dear Nancy,
I want a landscaped, divided 2-lane (alternative) bypass for Willits. I've studied the EIS/EIR and listened to comments of other citizens. Impacts needing consideration:

190-2

- Noise – the traffic is plenty noisy as it is – don't add.
- Visual – a 4-lane would look ugly
- Loss of local business – we're scraping along as it is
- Waste of Tax Dollars – need I say more?
- Woodland and farmland impact – hey! We need more trees – not less
- Brooktrails access – that bottleneck is already scarey – needs fixing

190-3

190-4 There are more impacts, well described in the Willits Environmental Center's letter. However, you're a busy person, so this is my verson [sic].

All the best,
Sheryl Smith

191 John and Marianna Smoot

191-1 General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

191-2 Regarding Brooktrails Township second access road, see General Response 1.6.

Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative for construction because it would result in the least overall environmental harm while meeting the purpose and need for the project.

"John & Marianna Smoot" <jsmoot@lfriendly.com >

09/03/2002 10:30 AM

To: <nancy_mackenzie@dot.ca.gov>
cc:
Subject: 101 Willits Bypass

Dear Ms. MacKenzie:

I know this is beyond the August 26, 2002 date for public comment, however, I wanted to give feedback.

191-1 I do not support the 2-lane bypass that is proposed by the Willits Environmental Center. I believe that it is short-sighted and just shuffles the traffic problem. A longer term approach is to complete a standard freeway (2 lanes north, 2 lanes south) and offramps.

191-2 I don't have strong feelings about one alternative over the other. It would however be good to deal with the traffic issues of the brooktrails community and minimize impact on the little lake valley.

Marianna Smoot
707/459-6411

192 Mark Snedeker

192-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

The Quail Meadows Interchange, which is north of the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection (Environmental Atlas, Map 6), would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6.

See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project.

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

192-1 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.

Mark Snedeker
P.O. Box 41
Willits, CA 95490
707-984-8491

193 Jennifer and Theresa Sookne-Mizell

Dear Ms. Mackenzie:

We have been unable to attend the meetings in Willits to give our input on the proposals for a Willits freeway bypass. We live in Willits and commute Monday through Friday to Ukiah and back. Our work hours and the stress of our jobs have prevented us from attending the meetings. However, as we are members of the Willits community and love where we live, we would like our input to be considered. We are in favor of:

193-1 • Freeway bypass of Willits from Haehl Creek in the south to the Truck Scales in the north

193-2 • Commercial Street exit from the freeway bypass

193-3 • Four Lane bypass along this route, continuing the four lanes from south of Haehl Creek

193-4 • Second access to Brooktrails via Wild Oat Canyon Road

193-5 • Restoration of Willits Creek

Further, we favor the Elsie/Wild Oat Canyon option for several reasons:

193-6 • This option will remove congestion from the Sherwood Road/Hwy 101 intersection (including High School traffic). This intersection is almost always congested. If the Quail Meadows interchange were adopted, it would become even more congested.

193-7 • Brooktrails will finally get the second access so desperately needed. We live in town, but going to isit friends in Brooktrails, one is always pushed up and down the hill by other traffic because the road is so congested. It is also a horrible fire hazard with only one road in and out.

193-8 • The rerouting of traffic around Willits will make the commute much easier for those residents of Willits who live in town and would not need to use the bypass at all. We are two such residents and often now drive out through the valley rather than sit in traffic for twenty minutes or so during rush hour.

193-9 Lastly, we strongly urge that this is a four lane bypass. It would make no sense at all to construct a bypass to alleviate the slowing of traffic through town and then slow it on the bypass because a bottleneck was created by going from four lanes to two. 101 North and South is a main truck route for this part of Northern California. Most of the large truck traffic passes through town and keeps going. This traffic necessitates the four lanes.

193-10 While Caltrans may have the engineers and know-how to design and make the bypass a reality, Willits is our town and we know its needs and its quirks. Thank you for considering our input.

Sincerely,
Jennifer and Theresa Sookne-Mizell

193-1 Truck Scales interchange is the northern interchange for Alternatives C1T and the hybrid L/C. Neither of these alternatives meets Clean Water Act Section 404 criteria and therefore, are not eligible for construction (see General Response 1.3).

193-2 See General Response 1.9 regarding center valley interchange.

193-3 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR are four-lane facilities to meet the purpose and need of the project.

193-4 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

193-5 See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

193-6 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (see General Response 1.3). Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school. See General Response 1.8.

193-7 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

193-8 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic on local streets.

193-9 See response to Comment 193-3.

193-10 Public involvement has been critical to understanding local concerns about the project. See response to Comment 179-1 (Donna Schindel).

194 This number intentionally left blank

195 Larry Stropes

195-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (see General Response 1.3).

195-2 Public involvement has been critical to understanding local concerns about the project. See response to Comment 179-1 (Donna Schindel). Undoubtedly, some local traffic will move to the bypass rather than travel through Willits. However, existing and future congested conditions from local traffic on the combined U.S. 101/Main Street were the impetus for constructing the bypass to relieve congestion for interregional traffic.

Larry Stropes
23851 Sherwood Road
Willits, CA 95490-8587
Phone: 707-459-1642 Email: lstropes@concentric.net

August 8, 200

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

Attn: Ms. Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

195-1 This is to urge you strongly to support the "Elsie" version (a combination of your "L" & "C" routes) for th 101 bypass of Willits.

195-2 It should be critical for you to consider as most important the input of local residents. Probably the highe percentage of passenger miles on this new bypass will be accounted for people who live in and around Willit

195-3 I understand that this is a national highway, and that the state will pay for most of the bypass. So your decision will likely be most influenced by what you think is best for the state.

But we all have a great opportunity to build a 4-lane bypass that will allow state & out-of-state people to wh around Willits if they want to, provide an alternative escape route/traffic alleviator for Brooktrails residen and minimize disruption to downtown Willits. No other alternative has all these positive factors.

195-4 As suggested by local resident/county supervisor candidate Hal Wagenet, it seems like a good idea to chanc the streambed of Outlet Creek back to the way it was before the railroad came in the early 1900s. That shoul ameliorate any environmental problems with putting the northern interchange near the truck scales.

195-5 Any alternative calling for an interchange immediately north of the high school would be a disaster for ou community because it would create additional noise, safety & traffic problems. We need the northern inte change to be further north than just the edge of town to minimize that inevitable noise, improve safety an smooth out traffic flows.

Thank you for your consideration.

Larry Stropes

195-3 Any of the build alternatives provide a bypass of Willits, will accommodate a second access for Brooktrails, and reduce traffic congestion in downtown Willits.

195-4 See General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration.

195-5 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school. See General Response 1.8.

196 Don and Dee Swain

196-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative (see General Response 1.3). The alternative does not go straight through the valley but meanders somewhat, to avoid the business park and the park/recreation complex, and to minimize impacts to the large oak riparian woodland.

General Response 1.3 explains the reasons Alternative E3 does not meet Clean Water Act criteria, and therefore, will not be considered for construction.

August 8, 2002

Caltrans
Program/Project Management, Willits Bypass
P.O. Box 3700
Eureka, CA 95502

To Whom It May Concern:

196-1 We support running the Willits Bypass going straight through the Valley.

The west side option would be excessivly expensive and would destroy beautiful land that would probably develop nicely on its own. The Valley route would not negatively affect that area as it would lay low and have minimum visual negative impact.

The negative impact on the Valley ecology would be less than a peacemeal development that would otherwise take place, as we're sure the Caltrans engineers would come up with a design that would insure the current ecosystem would be maintained in the best possible manner. The Valley route would also be the most efficient and comfortable for the drivers going past Willits on Highway 101.

You have our support to do the responsible design and run the bypass straight through the Valley.

Sincerely,

Don and Dee Swain

Don and Dee Swain

1512 Everett St.
Alameda, CA

197 Michael Sweeney

197-1 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school and the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

197-2 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

P.O. Box 1001
Ukiah, CA 95482
July 25, 2002

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

RE: Willits by-pass

Dear Ms. Daniels:

197-1 I am concerned that a Quail Meadows Interchange (L1T north) would create major problems with traffic circulation on the local roads. The opposition of the City of Willits and Brooktrails CSD should be respected.

197-2 There is a better way. I urge Caltrans to select the Elsie/Wild Oat Canyon alternative.

Sincerely,

Michael E. Sweeney

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

198 Matthew and Holly Taylor

198-1 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the high school and the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

Double 8 Ranch

26500 Reynolds Highway ~ Willits CA 95490 ~ (707) 459-2518

August 24, 2002

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

Dear Ms. Daniels,

We recently received a postcard from your office requesting comments on the 101 Willits Bypass. It was addressed to Francis and Sylvia Rae Rust. We purchased the property from Frank Rust in May of this year. So rather than forwarding your card on, we are responding to your request.

We certainly think that a bypass is needed to solve the traffic problems in town. At this point there are so many different proposals we can't say which one we think is best. Consequently, we will just relay our biases and hope that you will consider them as you choose the option you deem best.

198-1 The land that we own is at the far north end of the Little Lakes Valley so we think that we are a few miles away from the proposed changes. Because of our location we are not sure that any of your choices will have a major impact upon us. We do, however, think that you should consider the Brooktrails commuters' access to the bypass as one priority. If you can keep them away from the traffic light at the north end of town traffic will flow a lot smoother through town at commute hours. The other issue we think that you should consider is the number of lanes for the bypass. A four lane bypass coming off of a two lane highway will encourage vehicles to use the bypass to pass slower traffic. This will increase the noise level significantly. Please try to keep the bypass to two lanes (one each way). It will certainly be better for us but I think that the whole community will benefit from the lower noise level.

Thank you for your consideration.

Regards,

Matthew and Holly Taylor

199 Rick Thomas

199-1 Caltrans economic analysis includes a quantitative model utilizing traffic projections and field observations. Statistics and models are frequently utilized to objectively simulate existing conditions and impacts.

199-2 The comment probably refers to U.S. 101 at Ridgewood grade. A number of projects have been initiated and constructed to improve this section of highway. 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.

199-3 Upon construction of Modified J1T, the south end of Main Street (the "Miracle Mile") would become S.R. 20. Traffic heading for U.S. 101 from the south end of the business district would travel south along Main Street/S.R. 20 to the Haehl Creek Interchange, where motorists could choose either northbound or southbound U.S. 101 (See Appendix H, FEIS/EIR).

SCL COMPANY
6240 Montecito Boulevard • Santa Rosa, California 95409 • (707) 538

8-8-02

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

re: Willits Bypass

Dear Ms Daniels,

I represent the company which owns and operates the largest shopping center in the Willits trade area, Evergreen Village Shopping Center. I am writing this letter out of concern about the entire management of the Willits Bypass project and maintenance of the highway between Willits and Cloverdale.

199-1 The Bypass EIR is in my opinion completely flawed due to fundamental manipulation of data. No one from Caltrans has contacted our company for input or data for determining economic impacts that any one of the four bypass alternatives might cause. That Brings up the issue of the appropriateness of one EIR, for four alternative Bypass routes? First this is a massive waste of the time of all parties involved by forcing an endless "what if" guessing game for an infinite amount of possibilities that four routes would inflict upon the community. It is just not right!

199-2 Another impact which was not adequately addressed is the issue of available human and financial resources to maintain this entire at risk route between Ukiah and Willits while or after the Bypass construction is committed. What are the financial and actual in place systems to fix the slipping mountain and then the same question while the Bypass project is being constructed?

More specific questions we would like addressed are as follows;

199-3 1) Interchange Locations and Impacts;
a) What will be the access route to the By-Pass at the IMMEDIATE

South end of the existing business district?

199-4 b) Will there be a tie in to the Traffic Signal with a road directly to the south interchange of the By-Pass?

2) Mitigation of Adverse Impacts:

199-5 a) What is the plan to mitigate the adverse impacts of the diversion of the Business traffic away from the "old" US 101?

b) What considerations have been given to the entire community and total Service area who have invested and worked for years to serve the Community and Trade Area?

199-6 c) Why is the improvement of the existing route through town to improve traffic flows by modern standard designs not been addressed in the EIR?

199-7 d) What are the alternatives to improving traffic flow through town and to reduce the impacts of the bottleneck in town.

199-8 e) Why has the entire subject of negative impacts on the existing business community and the results of massive blight upon the community not been addressed and considered?

3) Land Use Free-For-All:

199-9 a) Will any proposed new development or projects to take advantage of the new highway interchanges be controlled by strict zoning or any other restrictions to avoid adverse conflicts with the existing established business infrastructure and investments? Or will all the land around all the interchanges be available for development without restrictions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rick Thomas
Vice-President

199-4 The writer of this letter represents the owner/operator of the Evergreen Center, and the question addresses access to the shopping center. The existing highway in the "Miracle Mile" area would remain as it is, although it would be S.R. 20 under the valley alternatives, and would be South Main Street under Alternative E3. Under any of the alternatives, the traffic signal at Evergreen Center would remain in operation, and the existing highway south of the signal would convey traffic to the southern interchange of the alternative.

199-5 The need for mitigation is not anticipated. The Economic Impact Report anticipates that some businesses located along the existing alignment of U.S. 101 would be impacted by the proposed build alternatives. Specifically, those businesses that derive customers primarily from through traffic may see reductions in sales as traffic is routed away from Main Street. However, this loss in business 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 congestion through the middle of the City to result in improved overall business conditions in the City. The impact on sales tax revenue is expected to be either imperceptible or positive. See Sections 3.3.6 and 3.3.8 of the FEIS/EIR for additional discussion.

199-6 Improvements on U.S. 101/Main Street would not achieve the purpose and need of the project to reduce congestion, improve safety, and achieve at least an LOS "C." 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.

199-7 Any of the bypass alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR, by removing interregional traffic from local streets, will improve traffic flow through town.

199-8 See response to Comment 199-5.

199-9 See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

200 John Thorslev

August 3, 2002

Cher Daniels, Chief
Caltrans Office of environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, CA 94833

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Dear Ms. Daniels:

200-1 I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Willits Bypass and am greatly concerned that it fails to acknowledge and substantively address a number of unavoidable significant impacts the proposed 4-lane bypass would impose on the Willits and the surrounding area. The following comments illustrate the need to reassess the number of identified significant impacts of the various routes and to consider the two-lane bypass option in the total context of the Willits area and the highway to the north of the bypass.

200-2 1. Safety. The current plan, which does not recognize Brooktrails traffic nor even through traffic to Fort Bragg and other points on the coast, will create a new and dangerous situation at the Willits High Schools. Just when children are arriving at the schools, Brooktrails commuters will be passing the high school heading north to reach the bypass around Willits. When school lets out, students will again be impacted by Brooktrails traffic doubling back from the north end of the bypass. With the failure to recognize highway 20 through traffic, those acquainted with the consequent congestion at the south end of Willits will take the bypass and double back past the highschool to reach highway 20. Unlike through traffic to the north, which is showing a slight decrease in actual count, highway 20 through traffic is increasing and can be expected to continue to do so with the growth of the coast communities in both population and tourism business. This greatly increased hazard to students attending both the regular and the alternative high schools is a specific and absolute impact of the bypass plan's failure to address a significant impact. Anyone foolish enough to be involved in an injury accident at the midpoint of the bypass should choose their timing carefully; if the accident occurs in the morning or afternoon rush hours (about five hours total per day), emergency vehicles will not be able to reach them. Their best bet would be to start a small fire and hope the CDF will arrive by helicopter. The Wild Oat Canyon connection to Brooktrails and the Willits Creek restoration, proposed by Hal Wagenet and others, would greatly mitigate this impact and must be addressed in the EIR. The two lane bypass is an option that would allow highway 20 traffic to be addressed in a way that would further reduce the safety hazard created by the current proposals and still meet all through traffic requirements for the next thirty years. Failure to include this option in the report does not appear to meet a minimum standard.

200-3 2. Economic Impact. For the reasons elaborated under the safety heading, the Willits business community will both lose business from through traffic and will also find that Brooktrails commuters are discouraged from shopping locally because of the convoluted traffic patterns. The failure of the EIR to realistically address economic impact ignores this problem and follows it by

200-1 See response to Comment 65-1 (Lea Cassady). Also, General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore, was not included for consideration in the DEIS/EIR.

200-2 Modified Alternative J1T would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails second access road. See General Response 1.6 regarding a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.8 regarding Quail Meadows Interchange; General Response 1.3 regarding Alternative L/C; General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration and General Response 1.10 regarding a two-lane bypass.

200-3 Any bypass alternative that routes traffic around Willits will provide Brooktrails residents commuting out of the area to work with a choice between bypassing Willits to shop elsewhere or shopping in Willits. Given the proximity of retail centers in Willits to Brooktrails, and the lack of comparable facilities in Brooktrails, Willits is likely to continue to be frequented by Brooktrails residents after construction of the proposed bypass.

See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

200-4 See response to Comment 65-1 (Lea Cassady). Please see Chapter 5 of the FEIS/EIR for discussion on coordination and public involvement during development of the various Bypass alternatives.

failing to consider conservation easements around the interchanges.

200-4 3. Natural Environment. The EIR fails to recognize significant impacts on farmland, loss of oak woodlands, wetlands. The options listed under other headings above would also impact these impacts. Mitigations must include specific functional processes, plans to explore some possible untried alternatives do a disservice to our community and to the people of California.

Clearly, there is a great need for public input and serious consideration of alternatives before the EIR is prepared in final form. I hope you will place public interest over bureaucratic protocol and see that the additional work necessary to make this EIR the best possible document is carried out. Willits has waited almost fifty years for a bypass. I have only met two people in the community who did not want a bypass, and one of them is wavering. We want a bypass but I hope that Willits will not have a Soviet experience in which the central government tramples the rights of its' citizens to meet narrowly focused Agency goals.

As a citizen, I am requesting that the community identified significant impacts be fully addressed in the EIR.

Thank you for your attention.

John P. L. Thorslev
P.O. Box 1107
Willits, CA 95490
Fax 707-459-3896
Ph: 707-459-1488
Jolesss@earthlink.net

cc: Maiser Khaled, Chief District Operations-North, FHA

201 Clifford Tichenor

201-1 Comment noted. After the public comment period for the DEIS/EIR, Alternative E3 was eliminated from consideration as a LEDPA for its overall environmental harm, including its impact to at least 114 residences (General Response 1.3).

Clifford Tichenor
1570 Buckhorn Rd.
Willits, CA 95490
(707)459-3522
August 4, 2002

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

Dear Cher Daniels,

201-1 I want to go on record as being opposed to the E3 Willits Bypass option.

As a resident of Buckhorn Rd. for the last twenty years, I believe that this western bypass route would adversely affect the quality of life for me and the dozen residences on Buckhorn Rd. The noise and the air pollution would be a constant source of irritation. The visual impact would alter the esthetics of this mostly pristene landscape. And this is not to mention the devastating impact of a spill or other mishap, (including fire), that would alter the already delicate nature of the western Willits environment. Already erosion is a major concern here.

Unable to view the latest arial photography, I suspect from the previous Caltrans arials that my house and likely others built in the forest canopy in my neighborhood did not show up. This could skew some of the data in respect of the number of residents affected by the E3 option.

I want to be brief, there are many reasons to oppose the E3 option. Hear my voice as it emphatically reiterates: The E3 is a bad idea!

Sincerely,

Clifford Tichenor

202 Warren Topp

202-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

202-2 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR are four-lane facilities to meet the purpose and need of the project, including improving traffic safety.

Aug. 8, 2002

Nancy MacKenzie

This letter is meant to express my
202-1 support for the By pass Route known as ELSIE.
I think that if Cal. Trans. looks a little
harder they too will agree with the majority
of people in this area who will have to live
with the final decision.

As for the second part, the two lane By pass
202-2 I think that it is the dumbest idea put
forth today. A recent accident just North
of Willits on Monday further points out how
unsafe that would be.

Thank You
Warren Topp
Warren Topp
Phone # 707-459-3571
25517 Fairbanks Pl.
Willits CA. 95490

203 Sylvia Tucker

203-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative C1T does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). In addition to Alternative C1T's impacts to aquatic resources and potentially adverse impacts to listed species, the NEPA/404 agencies expressed concerns that Alternative C1T's location further to the east would be potentially growth-inducing.

While Alternative C1T would require fewer residential relocations (3) than Modified Alternative J1T, there is sufficient equivalent housing in Willits for the 10 residential relocations that would be required by the latter alternative.

203-2 Modified Alternative J1T would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails second access road. See General Response 1.6 regarding a Brooktrails Township second access road.

203-3 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 discusses why a center valley interchange on the valley alternatives is beyond the scope of this project.

203-4 Section 5.4.6 (DEIS/EIR) discusses the project's impacts to prime farmland and Williamson Act parcels. Map 13 of the Environmental Atlas (Volume 4) shows the project's impacts on both prime and non-prime Williamson Act parcels. See also Appendix E (FEIS/EIR).

(01)

208 East Valley St.
Willits, Calif. 95490

7/18/02

Dear Nancy:

This letter is to express my thoughts on the Willits Bypass and to share a few of my feelings on the 'local' criticism regarding it's construction.

Most of us folks that live within the city limits of Willits are thrilled with Cal-Trans proposal for the 4 lane bypass. I've spoken with many of my neighbors who all endorse your plan, however many are busy with small children, ill or elderly, who most likely won't contact you, but I told them I would convey their sentiments as well as my own.

After studying the information on the bypass provided to the Willits library, my preference is for alternate C1T. I realize there will be more wetlands
203-1 impact (heck, this whole valley is a "wetland" every winter), but they can be mitigated. It results in fewer homes lost (in a housing "challenged" area) and costs the least. As it is the furthest east alternate it also gives Willits future space to grow without being divided by a freeway. I know, many say this will never happen but after living in Sonoma county for 24 years - well, I think it will.

As for the 'Brooktrails/second exit' debate, it would be wonderful if everyone could get what they want but this is after all the 'Willits Bypass' project! I realize that combining both projects would be the most cost
203-2 effective, and if there are enough funds to achieve that - fine, but the primary focus should be on the bypass itself. There are some very vocal, arrogant Brooktrails residents who think their wants and needs should be paramount and I hope Cal-Trans won't pander to their tantrums. After all, they chose to live in the hills knowing full well the anticipated number of homes/residents forecast, the distance to shopping and jobs, and the inevitability of impacted roads.

If there were any additional funds available I would like to see an
203-3 exit directly to Hwy. 20, to eliminate some of the back up through the south end of town.

Another 'negative' I hear from many who live out of town, is the need to "preserve the valley agriculture". I frequent the valley on a regular basis and see very little "real" agriculture, instead just a collection of small business (feed
203-4 store, driving range, vets office, trucking), a school, some very run-down dwellings, ranchettes and some hobby farms! Where the alternates are proposed I dont see 'agriculture' as I know it, so I don't know what that smoke screen is all about! Besides, cattle and horses will graze anywhere!

203-5 All of the valley alternatives would be separated from the highest-density uses in the City by the Northwestern Pacific Railroad tracks. Both Alternatives C1T and LT lie further to the east than Alternatives J1T and Modified J1T. Modified J1T strikes a balance in that it stays close to the City to avoid habitat fragmentation impacts and impacts to aquatic resources, yet avoids community resources, specifically the business park and the park/recreation complex. Proximity impacts resulting from Modified Alternative J1T would not be expected to result in the conversion of owner-occupied homes to tenant-occupied homes.

203-5 Again, we're hoping Cal-Trans opts for the C1T alternate, not only for future city expansion but also to eliminate as much traffic noise as possible from east Willits. There are many beautiful homes on this side of town but if freeway noise impacts our east side neighborhoods it could reduce property values and turn this side of town into rentals. Please don't add to the stigma of "THAT" side of town, which we fight constantly.

203-6 By the way, on Map 25A my property is shown as 'right of way', as (indicated by the symbol), I'm assuming to the railroad. It's not, it's a 1/2 acre parcel - 300' deep - zoned R-1. I don't know if it's of any consequence to Cal-Trans but felt I should inform you of the error.

203-7 Thank you for taking the time to listen to all of our thoughts and input on your proposals. Most of us trust your (collective) judgement, after all you are the experts and will ultimately do whatever needs to be done. If I can be of any assistance please contact me.

Sincerely,
Sylvia Tucker
(707-459-1690)

203-8 P.S. - Sorry I missed the recent meeting at the library. It wasn't publicized, which I sometimes think is deliberate, to prevent opposing viewpoints (pro bypass) from being voiced.

203-6 Map 25A (Volume 2, DEIS/EIR) shows future right of way for the proposed Alternative C1T. The scale of the map and inaccuracies in the assessor's parcel maps limited the detail that could be included. Please note that Alternative C1T will not be considered for construction since it does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404 criteria.

203-7 Caltrans and FHWA appreciate the public's input on the DEIS/EIR and the project, and will continue coordinating with City of Willits and Mendocino County throughout final design and construction of the project.

203-8 Caltrans and FHWA were not aware of the referenced meeting.

204 Anita Turcotte

204-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

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.

Dear Ms. Cher Daniels,

204-1 I am a long time resident of Willits, Ca. I have watched one group after the other come and go on the Willits Bypass problem/solution. It is very critical that something be done about the traffic going through this town now and stop arguing about the where and if's that every one keeps throwing out. It is impossible to get from one end of town to the other anymore and has been for years. It is too dangerous to try and cross Main St.(101) in a car or on foot in numerous spots. Every year it gets worse. The best solution appears to be with the Elsie/Wild Oat Canyon proposal. The Quail Meadows Interchange will only make our bottleneck at the bottom of Sherwood Rd. worse. We have a high school and a convenience store located there plus the normal traffic that lives there, let alone the thousands of people travelling through and not to mention the incredible amount of truck traffic. Quail Meadow Interchange will do nothing to help the access into Brooktrails either. Please help us get this project going NOW as everyone in Ca. seems to be moving here or travelling through the area.

Thanks for listening,
Sincerely,

Anita Turcotte

Anita Turcotte

2720 Deer Place
Willits, CA 95490
1-707-4597030

205 Dave Turner

205-1 Any of the bypass alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR meet the purpose and need of the project which includes improving traffic safety on U.S. 101 within the project limits. Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Because Alternative E3 does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404 criteria, it is not eligible for construction. Comment noted.

205-2 Any of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR would reduce the amount of traffic on Main Street in Willits, which would also benefit traffic using S.R. 20.

Alternative E3 would provide traffic on the U.S. 101 corridor an opportunity to bypass Willits completely and connect to S.R. 20. This may be perceived as having a marginal benefit to the coastal communities near the western terminus of S.R. 20, since this traffic would no longer be routed through Willits. The time savings would be on the order of 5 minutes on a trip of approximately one hour (more than 30 miles on a roadway with numerous turns). Time savings are always economically desirable and may provide a noticeable benefit to businesses that ship multiple loads through the project area daily. The time savings provided by Alternative E3, however, would not have a significant impact on economic conditions in Fort Bragg or other coastal communities.

Dave Turner
<dave@daveturner.org>

08/25/2002 09:47 PM

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

August 25, 2002

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

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie

205-1 Please consider the over 10,000 people on the coast who use Highway 20 to get in or out of Fort Bragg. As your EIR states, The Western Bypass (alternative E-3) will save lives. And a disproportionate number of lives lost will be of Fort Bragg and North Coast residents. Table 3-2[1] of your report demonstrates that collisions will be reduced by a minimum of 234 over the next 5 years. That is almost 50 accidents every year we can eliminate by a western bypass.

The only other route residents of Fort Bragg have to go to Santa Rosa or the bay area is via a stretch of Highway 1 Caltrans has deemed to have higher than normal accidents.

205-2 Furthermore, in addition to the safety issues and lives to be saved by a Western Bypass, I ask you to consider the economic impact on a community already suffering from the closure of the GP Mill. As the North Coast depends more and more on Tourism we can not afford to miss an opportunity to make it safer and easier for visitors to reach the coast.

Please consider the overall safety of the Western Bypass (E-3) as well as the economic impact on North Coast tourism.

Dave Turner
Chairman, Fort Bragg Planning Commission
535 North Corry St.
Fort Bragg, CA 95437

206 Robert Turner

August 21, 2002

Cher Daniels
Office of Environmental Mg'mt.
Caltrans District 3
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr.
Sacramento, Ca., 95833

Attn: Nancy Mackenzie;

206-1 We urge you to proceed with the construction of a Four-Lane Bypass for the town of Willits.

206-2 Our town realizes an influx of retired Seniors and commuters who can't afford to purchase homes farther South. With this growth we get people with diverse interests and ideas. Many of these ideas are nothing but distractions to slow Bypass construction.

For example: There is no farming or ranching in our Valley, no sacred land that needs to be protected and no lovely hills that should be preserved.

206-3 Traffic that needs to get through Willits is choking any chance for improved lifestyle and it impedes the transaction of local business.

206-4 Your latest Bypass proposal is most satisfactory. A two-lane road would be a nightmare and a death trap.

206-5 Please don't study this Bypass any longer and incur further delays just to solve a few perceived local problems.

Sincerely;

Robert Turner
661 South Main St.
Willits, Ca., 95490

206-1 Comment noted. A four-lane bypass meets the purpose and need for the project.

206-2 The project would not interfere with existing agricultural activities in the Little Lake Valley. However, the project would result in the conversion of prime and unique farmland soils (Section 3.4, FEIS/EIR). Mitigation measures are proposed to reduce impacts of the project to farmland and visual resources (see Appendix A, FEIS/EIR). The reference to sacred lands is vague; however, no properties meeting the definition of sacred lands, as defined under state and federal law, has been identified in the project area.

Section 5.10 (DEIS/EIR) and Section 3.10 (FEIS/EIR) describe the visual impacts and mitigation measures that are proposed to reduce project impacts.

206-3 Comment noted. The construction of a bypass will reduce local traffic congestion, resulting in improved conditions for local traffic, bicyclists, and pedestrians and better access for businesses.

206-4 Comment noted. A two-lane facility does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

206-5 See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for estimated project schedule. Listening to local concerns has been 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 City of Willits and Mendocino County throughout final design and construction of the project.

207 April Tweddell

207-1 See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for estimated construction schedule.

207-2 A four-lane bypass meets the project's purpose and need, which includes improving safety (see Chapter 2, DEIS/EIR).

Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative (see General Response 1.3). Alternative C1T does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria and, therefore, will not be considered for construction. Along with Alternative L/C, this alternative has the greatest direct impact to jurisdictional wetlands and other waters of the U.S., and the extensive creek realignment required for this alternative would result in adverse impacts to habitat of three federally listed fish species, including critical and essential habitat of federally listed fish species.

Pacific Properties

36 South Street, Willits, Californ

August 18, 2002

Dear Ms. Daniels,

207-1 I am commenting on the Willits Bypass. Let's just DO it!

207-2 I am in favor of a 4-lane bypass and prefer route C because it seems to adversely impact the fewest residences.

In my opinion, there would be too many accidents if we used a 2-lane version. We already have far too many accidents and human injuries with the traffic congestion going through the center of Willits. My friend's son, for instance, just had spinal surgery necessary after a "fender-bender" with a concrete truck while stopping on Hwy. #101 to let a pedestrian walk across the road.

There are some very vocal and well-meaning people in Willits that do not want a 4-lane bypass. I respect their right to dissent. However, because of their dissent, the bypass is continually postponed and we desperately need traffic relief and better safety for our citizens.

If put to a vote, 99% of Willits' citizens would vote in favor of the 4-lane bypass. The 99% do not write letters, however. So here we are, again, waiting for the bypass. It's a common phrase in Willits to comment on the bypass as "not in my life time." I'm a healthy 60 years old. And I honestly do not know if the bypass will occur "in my life time."

Let's DO it!

Sincerely,

April Tweddell

208 Charles Ucker, Jr.

208-1 Because the project proposes to place fill material into wetlands and other waters of the U.S., it will require a Section 404 (Clean Water Act) individual permit for construction. The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) requires an analysis of alternatives to determine which one would result in the least overall environmental harm.

Cost is only one of a number of factors that eliminated Alternative E3 from consideration during the Section 404(b)(1) Alternatives Analysis process. General Response 1.3 explains the reasons Alternative E3 does not meet Clean Water Act criteria. Not only would Alternative E3 result in a number of adverse environmental impacts, but it is not a practicable alternative because it cannot be accomplished within the financial resources that could reasonably be made available and it is not feasible from the standpoint of technology and logistics.

While Alternative J1T has the least direct impacts to waters of the U.S. of the remaining alternatives, it would impact the business park and the park/museum complex, as well as a large, oak riparian woodland. Modified Alternative J1T, the Preferred Alternative, was developed to avoid these impacts. See General Response 1.3.

TO: U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS
REGULATORY BRANCH, NORTH SECTION
333 MARKET ST.
SAN FRANCISCO, CA, 94105-2197

PUBLIC NOTICE # 194740N DATE: JULY 17, 02

DATED: JULY 8, 2002

208-1 A COUPLE OF QUESTIONS HAVE TO BE ASKED: DO WE GO WITH THE ALTERNATIVE THAT IS LEAST EXPENSIVE BUT IMPACTS MORE WETLANDS (THAT TO ME ~~AND~~ WOULD BE ALTER. J1T - IMPACTS 21.1 (52.4) HA. [ACRES)). OR DO WE GO WITH THE ALTERNATIVE, THAT TO ME, IS THE MOST EXPENSIVE, BUT HAS THE LEAST IMPACT ON WETLANDS? THAT WOULD BE ALTER. E3 (6.1 [15.1] HA [ACRES)

ALTERNATIVE J1T (IMPACTS 21.1 [52.4] ACRES) PLANS FOR A 6000' VIADUCT, 2 BRIDGES (OVER HAEHLE AND UPP CREEKS), 7 MAINLINE STRUCTURES, AND 2 RAMPS FOR STREETS.

ALTERNATIVE C1T AND LT IMPACT MORE WETLANDS - C1T 52.3, 129.1 (ACRES), LT-29.4, 72.8 ACRES. OTHERWISE C1T AND LT ARE BASICALLY THE SAME AS J1T. HAVING THE SAME NUMBER OF BRIDGE STRUCTURE (TWO); APPROXIMATELY THE SAME NUMBER OF MAINLINE STRUCTURE: (C1T, 7 STRUCTURES, LT, 8 STRUCTURES). AND THE SAME NUMBER OF RAMPS, TWO. THE GREATEST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE THREE ALTERNATIVE THAT WOULD RUN EAST OF THE TOWN OF WILLITS WOULD BE THE LENGTH OF THE VIADUCT - C1T, 3000 FT, LT, 3,300 FT.

ALSO IN REFERRING TO MAP 16 (DELINEATED WETLANDS AND OTHER WATERS OF THE U.S.) ALTER. J1T AT THE SOUTHERN AND NORTHERN ENDS OF THE PROJECT DOES NOT IMPACT AS MUCH WETLAND AREA (SOUTHERN) OR IMPACTS ONLY THE WESTERN EDGE OF THE WETLANDS. SO THIS IS ANOTHER PLUS FOR ALTER J1T.

208-1 cont.

SO I RECOMMEND ALTERNATIVE J1T TO BE THE PREFERED ALTERNATIVE. IT IMPACTS LESS WETLANDS - 52.4 ACRES. JUST COUNTING THE NUMBER OF STRUCTURE THAT HAVE TO BE BUILT (I WOULD ASSUME THE MORE STRUCTURES YOU BUILD, THE MORE EXPENSIVE THAT ROUTE WILL BE): ALTERNATIVE J1T (COUNTING THE VIADUCT AS A STRUCTURE) 12 STRUCTURES WILL BE BUILT. E3, 25 STRUCTURES WILL BE BUILT. SO EVEN THOUGH E3 IMPACTS LESS WETLANDS, IT'S AT LEAST TWICE AS EXPENSIVE - IF NOT MORE, AS ALTERNATIVE J1T.

CHARLES H. UCKER, JR
1453 S. RIMHURST AVE,
GLENDORA, CA.,
91740

209 This number intentionally left blank

210 Catherine Wagenet

210-1 Caltrans did not recommend any specific alternative in the DEIS/EIR. Caltrans prepared a Section 404(b)(1) (Clean Water Act) Alternatives Analysis, which made a preliminary conclusions that Alternatives J1T and LT would result in the least overall environmental damage to the environment (Appendix H, DEIS/EIR). See Chapter 2 (FEIS/EIR), which discusses development of Modified Alternative J1T and the final Alternatives Analysis.

Any of the bypass alternatives will remove traffic from, and therefore reduce traffic on Main Street in front of the high school and at the Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

Modified Alternative J1T would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails second access road. See General Response 1.6 regarding a Brooktrails Township second access road. 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.

Mrs. Gordon M. Wagenet
P. O. Box 345
Willits, California 95490-0345

237

To Cal-Trans - Att. Nancy Mackenzie
Re EIR failure to support Willits' Preference for the Elsie LC By-Pass and the Truck Scales Interchange.

210-1 In the 2002 EIR for a Willits By-Pass route, Cal Trans recommends a route J1T/LT which ends at Quail Meadow Interchange. This is an EXTREMELY BAD OPTION. It WORSENS the traffic congestion at the bottom of Sherwood Road which carries traffic from Brooktrails, a development housing 4000 residents. That traffic would have to make a hair-pin left turn past the High School during morning and late afternoon commute hours, causing extremely dangerous congestion on 101 and backing up cars up two-lane Sherwood Road. This is an Unavoidable and Significant Impact of the Quail Meadow Interchange.

On the other hand, the Truck Scales Interchange, further north on 101, would reduce traffic hazards of the Sherwood Road/High School Area. It would funnel Brooktrails commuters onto the LC (Elsie) By-Pass from proposed Wild Oat Canyon Brooktrails Spit - The LC (Elsie) route through the valley is the best route, in the opinion of City of Willits, Willits Fire Department, California Forestry, County Sheriffs, Willits Police, all of whom favor the safest and the most practical route with the least ~~bad~~ Impact on our area - I join them and implore you to consider LC and Truck Scales -

Sincerely,
Catharine Wagenet

211 Gordon Wagenet

211-1 Because the project proposes to place fill material into wetlands and other waters of the U.S., it will require a Section 404 (Clean Water Act) individual permit for construction. The Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) requires an analysis of alternatives to determine which one will result in the least overall environmental harm. Alternative C1T (and L/C) does not meet Section 404(b)(1) criteria 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.

All of the valley alternatives require viaduct to avoid impacts to the floodway. Federal funds may not be used to construct viaduct to avoid waters of the U.S. when another reasonable and feasible alternative exists that meets Section 404(b)(1) criteria. See response to Comment 34-63 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

The typical section proposed includes 3.6 m (12 foot) wide lanes with 3.0 m (10 foot) outside and 1.5 m (5 foot) inside shoulders. It also includes a 13.8 m (46 foot) median. These widths were established using the *Highway Design Manual*, a guideline that puts forth important criteria for design and highway safety. The median does not meet current (18.6 m or 61 ft) standard practice as called for in the manual, and Caltrans Design has obtained approval from Headquarters (California Department of Transportation) for this exception to standard practice. The standards are established to meet driver expectations and to provide for a safe and efficiently operating facility. See General Response 1.13 for a discussion of median width.

GORDON M. WAGENET
PRESIDENT
HAL WAGENET
GENERAL MANAGER
101 N. MAIN ST.
TELEPHONE
707 - 459 - 5101
FAX 707 - 459 - 6437

WILLITS CALIFORNIA 101 ONE-O-ONE REDWOOD INC.

ONE-O-ONE REDWOOD, INC.
P.O. BOX 101
WILLITS, CALIFORNIA 95490

DOMESTIC & F
Lattice Panels • Chair
Stakes • La
Redwood • Whit
Painted • Natural •
We manufacture the
ΠO Port
Affordable She

Cher Daniels, Chief **July 30, 2002**
Caltrans Office of Environmental Management S-1
2389 Gateway Oaks Drive,
Sacramento, CA 95833
Attention: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator
Re: Willits By-pass
Dear Ms MacKenzie,

My wife and I built our home on Sherwood Road, just beyond the city limits of Willits in 1949. We joined with three other neighbors in buying oil to lay the dust from the occasional rancher or logging truck passing by. Today this road is the only access to over 1400 homes in Brooktrails alone and several thousand cars and trucks pass our driveway every day. Caltrans is in the final stages of planning for a four-lane by-pass of Willits.

211-1 **Troubling questions arise regarding this by-pass. Why is Caltrans so intent on moving 3.1 million yards of earth in order to have the Quail Meadow interchange, rather than moving 2.4 million yards for the Truck Scales interchange? Why would they choose to bridge the railroad three times at a cost of approximately $3 million for the Quail Meadow interchange rather than to avoid crossing it at all at the Truck Scales interchange? Why do they avoid viaduct construction like the plague, always citing "enormous cost", when it is the obvious solution for minimizing impacts on flora, fauna and wetlands of the Little Lake valley? Is cost the be-all and end-all? Is it better to build a less than satisfactory by-pass than to fight for the best possible one by cutting costs somewhere else? The savings realized by not crossing the railroad three times and hauling an extra 700,000 yards of earth would go a long way toward offsetting those "enormous costs". Why does the by-pass have to be so wide? Many urban freeways are just the minimum width to accommodate the twelve-foot lanes, and they carry a lot more traffic than this one ever will. Common sense dictates an absolute minimum here to avoid unnecessary disturbance to the environment and the confiscation of valuable valley land. Why must we adhere to the rulebook that says all four-lane freeways must have at least a 44-foot median? The concrete barrier down the Ridgewood grade seems quite effective. Build a minimum width freeway with concrete divider: another obvious way to save money.**

211-2 **We are really talking here about common sense. A good author on the subject is Philip K. Howard. In his book "The Death of Common Sense" he says on page 60 "How things are done has become far more important than what is done." On page 172 he says, "Whenever the rules are eased, our energy and good sense**

211-2 cont.

pour in like sunlight through opened blinds. After the 1994 earthquake in Los Angeles toppled freeways, California governor Pete Wilson suspended the thick book of procedural guidelines….Instead of a four-year trudge through government process, the Santa Monica freeway was rebuilt in sixty-six days, to a higher standard than the old one….When the rulebook got tossed, all that was left was responsibility."

Willits has endured a 40-year trudge! Thousands of hours and millions of dollars have been wasted on studies assessing the environmental impacts and disturbance of archeological artifacts on freeway routes that were never viable possibilities, such as Alternate E that carved its way through the heart of Brooktrails at an estimated cost of over twice the amount budgeted. All this was done to conform to the rulebook. Common sense was not a factor.

211-3

Caltrans is avoiding their responsibility to our area, hiding behind their mission to improve inter-regional traffic. They are not concerned with local problems, such as: how do Brooktrails residents get out of there? Their own survey shows that 60% of Brooktrails traffic is going beyond Willits, to Ukiah, Santa Rosa, Fort Bragg and elsewhere. Now THAT is inter-regional traffic! It IS their responsibility! Just because the Wild Oat canyon access to U.S. 101 has not yet been built in no excuse for Caltrans to ignore Brooktrails.

Common sense shows that the Quail Meadow interchange would do nothing to solve the commuter problem out of Brooktrails. In fact, it would make it worse. In order to get on the by-pass, traffic would then have to turn left at the foot of Sherwood road. This intersection can only accommodate two left turning cars waiting for the green light. What happens to the rest of the cars stacking back up the hill for hundreds of yards? Commuter traffic would be forced to drive past the already congested area at the high school. Can you imagine a worse scenario? Apparently Caltrans thinks this is a good idea. Some Caltrans officials should be required to make a few trips through the Sherwood-101 junction as punishment for ever conceiving such a bad idea!

Hope springs eternal that Caltrans will make it their responsibility to give us the best possible by-pass, on a viaduct where needed, and to the Truck Scales interchange. If they have the vision to see that the Wild Oat canyon road is the best access and if they have the courage to admit that it will serve a lot of inter-regional traffic, they will have, at long last, resorted to common sense.

Gordon Wagenet

Gordon Wagenet
Box 345, (23901 Sherwood, Road)
Willits, CA 95490

211-2 The Willits Bypass is a large, complex project that has required a thorough examination of possible solutions to traffic congestion on U.S. 101 in the project area. Project development, especially for a project of this magnitude, is a time-consuming process that ensures that public funds are based on thorough, sound decisions. For this bypass project, an extensive range of alternatives was examined as a result of considerable public involvement (Section 3.6, DEIS/EIR). Pursuant to a Memorandum of Understanding, the NEPA/404 agencies agreed on a range of reasonable alternatives meeting the purpose and need of the project. Only after completing technical studies for alternatives being considered could the NEPA/404 agencies and project development team determine the overall environmental harm of any given alternative and its engineering feasibility.

211-3 Any of the bypass alternatives will remove traffic from, and therefore reduce traffic on Main Street in front of the high school and at the Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

Since public circulation of the DEIS/EIR, the Mendocino County Department of Transportation and Brooktrails CSD have stated that a Quail Meadows interchange will provide a connection for a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6.

Again, Alternatives C1T and L/C, which include the Truck Scales Interchange, do not meet Section 404(b)(1) criteria and therefore, are not eligible for construction.

211-4

(1) Brooktrails traffic would be able to avoid driving through Willits by accessing Quail Meadows Interchange. The Truck Scales (Wild Oat Canyon) (on Alternatives C1T and L/C) does not meet Clean Water Act criteria for its adverse impacts to wetlands and listed fish species.

(2) See response to Comment 211-3.

(3) Since public circulation of the DEIS/EIR, the Mendocino County Department of Transportation and Brooktrails CSD have stated that a Quail Meadows interchange will provide a connection for a Brooktrails Township second access road. General Response 1.6.

(4) Alternatives C1T and L/C would require extensive creek realignment, which could have adverse impacts to listed fish species. See General Response 1.4 regarding creek restoration.

(5) Comment noted.

(6) See General Response 1.5.

(7) See General Response 1.7.

There will be only one interchange north of Willits:
Truck Scales or Quail Meadow

211-4

The Truck Scales Interchange is the BEST idea.

1. Inter-regional traffic from Brooktrails can avoid the city via the Wild Oat canyon access road.
2. It reduces traffic at the hazardous and congested junction of Sherwood road and U.S. 101.
3. It creates a quality evacuation route for Brooktrails and allows swift response for emergency vehicles.
4. It allows and actually enhances the Willits Creek Restoration project.
5. It NEVER crosses the railroad.
6. It enhances the new Willits sewer plant; increased flows allow plant to meet mandated discharge ratios
7 Supported by: City of Willits, Brooktrails, CDF, Little Lake FD, Mendocino County Sheriff, Office of Emergency Services, Mendocino Emergency Services Authority, Willits PD, DFG, a majority of local citizens.
THE PEOPLE AND THE FISH GET A FULLY FUNCTIONAL BY-PASS!

211-5

The Quail Meadow Interchange is a BAD idea.

1. It is a shorter distance, but has more "down time", frustration and hazards.
2. 2. It does NOT improve inter-regional traffic. In fact, it WORSENS it! Only two left-turn vehicles can wait at the Sherwood light; the rest pile up behind, blocking right turn on red as well. This is an UNAVOIDABLE AND SIGNIFICANT IMPACT.
3. Congestion hampers emergency vehicle response.
4. It prevents badly needed Willits Creek Restoration project, which is designed to help endangered steelhead and Coho salmon.
5. It requires THREE bridges over the railroad.
6. It flies in the face of overwhelming public opinion against it.

The Quail Meadow Interchange is a BAD idea.

211-5 See response to Comment 211-3 and 211-4 Item (7). For Item (4), see response to Comment 211-4, Item (4). For Item (5), the Quail Meadows Interchange would require four overhead structures and would maintain the existing at-grade crossing over the railroad tracks.

212 Hal Wagenet

August 20, 2002

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

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

Re: Willits Bypass

Dear Ms. Daniels:

I wish to thank Caltrans for the volume of work and detail on the Willits Bypass. Staff and personnel at every level have been responsive and cooperative. The maps, which the agency provided on request, were invaluable in explaining this complex subject.

Introduction

As candidate for Mendocino County 3rd District Supervisor, the Willits Bypass lies entirely within my district and I have a keen interest in its successful completion.

We are certain that any of the proposed 4-lane freeways will meet stated purpose and need for interregional traffic. Therefore, we remain focused on local impacts.

This letter is divided into two sections. The first part deals with traffic impacts and service issues in the northern end of the project. The second part addresses environmental impacts and solutions from the perspective of enabling the alternative with the highest perceived level of local service.

Part 1 – Traffic Impacts and Service Issues

History

The Willits Bypass has been a minor factor in my life since 1954, when it was announced during dinner table conversation that local businessman, Bob Harrah, had been given an award for assisting Caltrans to determine the route through the Little Lake Valley. From then until 1997, it remained an increasing irritation, sort of like an uncomfortable position that could be improved if only one could be motivated enough to get up and get at it.

All that changed when the Mendocino Council Of Governments pledged an entire funding cycle of $17.3 million as local match for the Willits Bypass. This action stimulated a prolonged flurry of activity and studies to deal with the many environmental requirements that had sprouted up since 1954.

It is now time to ask the hard question: What do we get for our 48 years of patience and our courageous funding commitment ?

212-1 **Brooktrails and its traffic needs are virtually ignored.**

We have a two-lobed community consisting of the City of Willits (population 5,000) and the Township of Brooktrails (pop 4,000). They are connected directly only by Sherwood Road. This former wagon road connects to US 101 only 50 yards from the Willits High School by an oblique angle intersection. It gains 250 feet in elevation in 0.8 mile with pitches of 17% and 16%. There are numerous blind corners with multiple driveway accesses in the 2.0 miles to the Brooktrails main entrance.

Sherwood Road / US 101 Intersection

212-2 This hazardous intersection handles all the local, commute and school traffic from Brooktrails, interregional vehicles, and a significant number of emergency response calls for fire and health problems related to the retirement age of a large portion of Brooktrails residents.

Fifty-five percent of Brooktrails traffic is identified in Caltrans' only study to be commute traffic, contributing greatly to internal congestion in the Willits and safety hazards at the Sherwood / 101 intersection. Yet none of Caltrans' studies projects new traffic patterns for this intersection in the context of the placement of the northern interchange of the Bypass and its relationship to the proposed second access to Brooktrails.

Further, we note the traffic studies were made in mid-July. At that time of year, many local residents are on vacation and all school and bus traffic is absent. ***Without a study when school is in session, the traffic results are fatally flawed.***

1. **The normal traffic patterns present during nine months of the year are not represented in the Draft EIR.**

212-3 A quick glance at the topography between either of the northern interchanges and Brooktrails points clearly to Wild Oat Canyon as the most likely route for the Brooktrails Second Access road. For the rest of this comment letter, any reference to Brooktrails Second Access is assumed to be via Wild Oat Canyon.

212-1 This comment regarding Sherwood Road, a local road, is noted.

212-2 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road and General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations at Quail Meadows Interchange.

Traffic counts were completed in April 1998 *(during the school year) and* in July 1998. From these counts, a design-hour volume or peak hour volume was established.

The primary objective in the hourly volume is to select a specific hour of traffic on which to base the analysis. It is particularly important to select the proper design hourly volume. Use of a lower volume would result in an inadequate design for many hours of the year. Truck traffic, for example, has seasonal increases (e.g., logging, lumber, etc.). This is accounted for in the chosen design hour as well as interregional, commute, and recreational traffic. Traffic volumes were higher in July than in April for the afternoon Peak Hour of 5PM to 6PM.; therefore, the July traffic counts were selected as representative of average Friday Peak Hour traffic during a summer month.

212-3 The Brooktrails CSD is considering a number of alternative routes for the second access road. The Brooktrails CSD has supported Caltrans' study of the Modified J1T because the Quail Meadows Interchange can provide a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6.

212-4 See response to Comment 212-2. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with the Quail Meadows Interchange.

212-5 See response to comment 115-1 (Bill Jack). Construction of the bypass would reduce the volume of traffic on U.S. 101 and thereby lessen congestion and risk to school children.

Modified Alternative J1T would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails second access road. See General Response 1.6 regarding a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.7 regarding emergency service provider access to the Quail Meadows interchange. See General Response 1.3, which explains why Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria and therefore cannot be considered as a candidate for construction.

212-4 The placement of the northern interchange will greatly affect internal traffic circulation in the City of Willits. It may compromise or enhance growth, convenience and safety depending on the alternate chosen.

2. **We request a destination traffic study when school is in session. Traffic impacts cannot be correctly analyzed without this additional study.**

3. **We request an analysis of the traffic patterns at Sherwood/101 for both summer (tourist) traffic and fall (school traffic) assuming:**
   a. **Quail Meadows Interchange is built and a second access to Brooktrails has not been constructed**
   b. **Quail Meadows Interchange is built and a second access to Brooktrails has been constructed at Wild Oat Canyon.**
   c. **Truck Scales Interchange is built and a second access to Brooktrails has not been constructed**
   d. **Truck Scales Interchange is built and a second access to Brooktrails has been constructed at Wild Oat Canyon.**

212-5 **Community Input**
It is the consensus of the people who live here and must live with the results of this project that the Quail Meadows Interchange would make traffic congestion at Sherwood / 101 worse, not better. If Alternate L1T is constructed, safety for school children, commuters and inter-regional travelers at Sherwood / 101 would be immediately compromised. This situation would worsen over time, as Brooktrails continues to grow, since it represents 80% of the available affordable housing opportunities in the county.

4. **The community recommends and supports the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon proposal. This is Alternate L in the south and Alternate C1T in the north, enabling a Brooktrails second access via Wild Oat Canyon.**

Community Support
This point of view is supported by the following elected officials, law enforcement and safety professionals:

- Mendocino County Board of Supervisors
- City of Willits
- Brooktrails Board of Directors
- Mendocino Council of Governments
- California Department of Forestry
- Little Lake Fire District
- Brooktrails Fire Department
- Willits Police Department
- Mendocino County Sheriff
- Emergency Medical Services
- Mendocino Emergency Services Authority
- Mendocino County Employers Council
- Willits Unified School District.

212-6 **Caltrans' Context Sensitive Solution Policy**
Under Caltrans' Context Sensitive Solution (CSS) policy, following Federal Highway Administration guidelines, Caltrans is allowed "flexibility in applying design standards and approving exceptions to design standards" in order to "seek transportation solutions that improve mobility and safety while complementing and enhancing community values and objectives."

The community strongly supports the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon Proposal at every level: elected officials, safety professionals, school officials and the citizens themselves.

5. **We believe Caltrans must apply the CSS Policy and deliver a bypass congruent with the clear preference of the community, i.e., the ELSIE hybrid alignment.**

Other Brooktrails and County Impacts

Brooktrails currently has a direct connection to the US 101 corridor.

212-7 6. **If the Quail Meadows Interchange were to be built, the Brooktrails Township would suffer degraded, not improved, service**. The County could build no feasible direct connection to the Quail Meadows Interchange. This would force Brooktrails traffic to enter town at Sherwood/101 and travel on city streets to connect to the freeway.

7. **In contrast, the Truck Scales Interchange meets Gateway classification under SB 45**. The second Brooktrails access via Wild Oat Canyon would be relatively easy to construct and public opinion is already focused in that direction.

Additionally, Brooktrails is an urban forest, with people living in close proximity to dense foliage. The specter of an Oakland Hills fire haunts every emergency responder in the area.

212-8 8. **The Quail Meadows Interchange would not give fire and safety emergency personnel and equipment good access and egress during the inevitable event**. It is not a question of "if", in this case, but "when".

9. **We request an analysis and consideration of these major connectivity and safety impacts to Brooktrails, due to northern interchange placement, prior to selection of the preferred alternative.**

10. **Brooktrails generates inter-regional traffic and Caltrans has an obligation to accommodate local needs and plans**. Even though the Brooktrails Second Access plan is not complete, at least part of this lack must be laid back on Caltrans' doorstep. The alignment of our local road is dependent on the northern interchange selected by Caltrans.

212-6 Caltrans applies Context Sensitive Solutions (CSS) wherever possible. The development of the Modified Alternative J1T is a context sensitive solution in its avoidance of community resources as well as its avoidance and minimization of impacts to biological resources. Due to its overall environmental harm, Alternative L/C does not meet Section 404(b)(1) Clean Water Act criteria, nor is it a context sensitive solution for its adverse environmental impacts.

212-7 Citizens of Brooktrails Township CSD and of Willits will experience improved service with construction of the bypass, which will reduce local traffic congestion. See response to Comment 212-5. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road and General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations on Quail Meadows Interchange.

212-8 The bypass will provide an expeditious route to the area as opposed to having to travel on congested Main Street. Either the Quail Meadows or Truck Scales Interchange would provide access for emergency services vehicles to a Brooktrails Township second access road. The Mendocino County Department of Transportation has stated, and Brooktrails Township CSD concurs, that a Quail Meadows Interchange can provide a connection for a Brooktrails Township second access road. No analysis is necessary. See General Responses 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road and 1.7 and 1.8 regarding traffic operations on Quail Meadows Interchange.

212-9 **Further advantages of the ELSIE alignment:**

The character of Willits will be well preserved with the ELSIE hybrid alignment.

11. **Less borrow soils in the amount of 700,000 cubic yards would be required for construction than for L1T.**

12. **With aggressive cooperation between Caltrans and Mendocino DOT, it may be possible to coordinate a borrow site for Caltrans with needed excavation for the Brooktrails Second Access.** This possibility could greatly reduce construction and soils transportation costs for both entities.

13. **We do not see any discussion of method of transportation methods or route for borrow soils in the Draft EIR. This should be detailed for public review prior to selection of the preferred route.**

14. **There are a number of places in the Draft EIR that do not describe actual mitigation measures and costs. We request that these options are made available for public comment, prior to final route selection.**

15. **Both the Haehl Creek Interchange and the Truck Scales Interchange should be permitted with conservation easements to prevent wildcat interchange commercial development, which would be very harmful to Willits business.**

16. **The Truck Scales Interchange will be a less likely target for interchange growth due to greater distance from infrastructure.**

Part 2 – Environmental impacts and Solutions

212-10 **Willits Creek Restoration (WCR)**

History

This major mitigation feature was informally proposed at the PDT meeting in the fall of 2000.
It was presented in detail at the PDT meeting in the spring of 2001.
In October 2001, we conducted a field trip to the northern interchanges and Willits Creek. Attendance included: the Caltrans Project Manager, Chief of Environmental Science, Field Biologists, Design Engineers, Department of Fish & Game biologists and staff, National Marine Fisheries Services personnel.

The WCR is intended to mitigate the most serious environmental impediments to the ELSIE hybrid alignment. It was not formally studied and is not mentioned in the Draft EIR.

212-9 See General Response 1.3 which discusses why the hybrid Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria and therefore is not a candidate for construction.

(11) The comment correctly points out Caltrans estimates that less fill material will be needed for Alternative L/C than for Alternative LT, although the quantity of reductions cited is incorrect. Caltrans estimates that Alternative LT would require about 2.6 million cubic meters (3.4 million cubic yards) of material while Alternative L/C would require about 2.2 million cubic meters (2.9 million cubic yards). Alternative L/C would require more material (2.2 million cubic meters) than either Alternative C1T (1.9 million cubic meters/2.5 million cubic yards) or J1T (2.1 million cubic meters/2.7 million cubic yards). Modified Alternative J1T would require approximately 1.9 million cubic meters/2.5 million cubic yards.

(12) The bypass project can only use soil from an approved, permitted borrow site. If the Brooktrails Township second access road project is able to complete its environmental approvals and obtain all necessary permits for construction of the project and use as a potential borrow site, then use of the area as an optional borrow site may be possible for the Willits bypass project.

(13) See Section 2.4 (FEIS/EIR) for a discussion of how the project could be constructed. Construction methods among the valley alternatives would be similar and would not determine the preferred alternative.

(14) See response to Comment 144-1 (Jason Minton). See General Response 1.14 regarding project mitigation.

(15) and (16) See General Response 1.12 regarding “growth at interchanges.”

212-10 “Overview” and (17), (20), (21), and (24) See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

(18) and (19) See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits creek restoration benefit to Willits wastewater treatment plant.

(22) Alternatives K and K2 were eliminated from further study for a number of reasons, including unavoidable impacts to wetlands, archaeological resources, Baker's meadowfoam and cost (Table 3-5, DEIS/EIR). Alternative C1T (north segment) and Truck Scales Interchange would affect two populations, and about 3 acres of suitable habitat of Baker's meadowfoam. However, the overwhelming drawbacks of this alternative (and the hybrid Alternative L/C) are its fill of wetlands and extensive creek realignment with direct and indirect impacts to federally listed fish species and their habitat.

(23) See response to Comment 212-6. See also response to Comment 34-5 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning).

212-10 cont.

Overview

With so many service advantages to northern C1T as part of the ELSIE hybrid, we feel that the impacts to fisheries, wetlands and Baker's Meadowfoam at this location were not properly addressed in the Draft EIR. Specifically, the listing of salmonid species is of great concern at this time. Plants can be moved and wetlands re-constructed, but the fish, once gone, are irreplaceable. And the fish need a quality environment.

Willits / Mill Creek (hereinafter Willits Creek) currently follows fence lines and bifurcates at the NWP railroad tracks in the vicinity of northern C1T. The shallow area on both sides of the railroad ballast is described as a "kill zone" by local DFG biologists. Spawning fish lose the channel in winter floodwaters and die in the fields as the waters recede. Summer fingerlings perish when the channels dry up, typically by mid-July.

If Caltrans were to select Alternate L1T, the "kill zone" would be left intact, with no mitigation requirement. A golden opportunity to correct a serious man-made impact would be lost.

17. Our studies led us to propose that Willits Creek be restored to its original dendritic configuration, thus providing a bypass for the fish separated from the freeway project perimeters. Quality meanders should be designed and riparian habitat planted early in the construction cycle for anticipated maturity by the time the facility is opened.

18. The increased water flows would also help the City of Willits, now in the EIR phase of a new wastewater treatment plant adjacent to the WCR zone, meet mandated discharge ratios.

19. Freeway runoff can be routed directly into the adjacent Willits Sewer Plant for processing prior to release into the fish habitat. This would be impossible to achieve using the Outlet Creek realignment as proposed in the Draft EIR.

Resource and Permitting Agency Support

20. The Willits Creek Restoration is supported by all the previously mentioned agencies with the addition of Department of Fish and Game and United States Department of Agriculture, Soils Conservation Department. From comments made by the Caltrans Project Manager at the August 6, 2002 Board of Supervisors meeting, we believe the Army Corps of Engineers shares this view.

21. Wetlands impacts may be partially mitigated by the WCR feature, and may be fully mitigated by electing to use a mitigation bank, if a suitable site cannot be found in within the watershed.

22. The decision to eliminate eastern alternatives K-1 and K-2 was also a decision to preserve the majority of Baker's Meadowfoam in the Little Lake Valley. Millions of these plants grow on the east side of the valley, while the impacts at northern C1T and the Truck Scales Interchange are estimated to be only 30,000 plants.

23. It is true that federal guidelines require avoidance of certain environmental impacts. But these rules also require cooperation with local entities, accommodation of local plans, and accepting citizen input. *Please see previous discussion of Caltrans' CSS policy.*

212-10 cont.

Funding for WCR

24. The Willits Creek Restoration is of great benefit to the endangered fish populations, wetlands mitigation and enhancement, the jointly operated Willits / Brooktrails Wastewater Treatment Plant, and allows improvement of local traffic service to the level of excellence by enabling the Truck Scales Interchange. With all these positive features, it is a definite candidate for TEA 21 enhancement funds. We encourage Caltrans to take the lead in an application for necessary monies from this source. We are certain the elected officials of the Mendocino County community would be strong supporters and allies in a bid for funding from this source.

212-11

25. The preferred alternative should include any possible measure to reduce footprint of the Bypass for environmental reasons, up to and including: narrowing of median, increased viaduct, and 2-lane grade separated phased construction, if necessary.

212-12

26. Alternate J1T has multiple negative impacts to the City of Willits including: noise, visual, recreational, constrictive borders to the town, loss of commercial property, and the previously discussed Quail Meadows Interchange. Very few people have even mentioned this route.

212-13

27. The lack of a preferred alternative and specific mitigation measures in the Draft EIR practically dictates a second Draft EIR or supplement to this first offering to separate the wheat from the chaff and render the project proof against legal action. We believe a preferred alternative with proper treatment of community concerns and a second comment period would facilitate successful completion of the project, in spite of appearances to the contrary.

212-14

Summary

In Mendocino County, we have identified the Willits Bypass as our top transportation priority and committed our funds to get it built. Our elected officials on the Brooktrails Board of Directors, Willits City Council and Mendocino County Board of Supervisors are all unanimous in their support of the ELSIE alignment. Fire, police, sheriff and emergency service providers are united in their preference. The citizens have educated themselves and turned out to support the ELSIE plan. The resource agencies look favorably on the major mitigation features.

If representative government works, and if Caltrans exists to serve the public rather than a process, the preferred route for the Willits Bypass will be the ELSIE hybrid alignment. It will include the Willits Creek Restoration and it will accommodate Brooktrails' needs.

Please expedite the selection of the ELSIE hybrid alternative as the preferred alignment for the Willits Bypass and include the Willits Creek Restoration as a major mitigation feature.

Best Regards,

Hal Wagenet

Cc: Rick Knapp, District 1 Director
Lena Ashley, Project Manager

212-11 See General Response 1.13 regarding median reduction. Modified Alternative J1T is the LEDPA, having the least overall environmental harm of the alternatives under consideration. Impact minimization measures are discussed in the Section 404(b)(1) Alternatives Analysis (Appendix G, FEIS/EIR). Two-lane phased construction would not reduce the project footprint since the ultimate construction would be a four-lane bypass.

212-12 While Alternative J1T has the least impacts to wetlands of the valley alternatives, it impacted the Sanhedrin business park and the park/recreation complex on Commercial Street. With our local partners and resource agencies, Caltrans and FHWA developed a Modified Alternative J1T that minimizes community impacts. See Chapter 2 (FEIS/EIR) for a detailed discussion of this alternative.

212-13 See General Response 1.11, which addresses supplemental and recirculated documents.

212-14 See General Response 1.4 regarding the proposed creek restoration and General Response 1.3 for a discussion of why the hybrid Alternative L/C cannot be considered as a candidate for construction because of its unavoidable adverse impacts.

213 Holly Wagenet

213-1 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR will reduce traffic on local streets including in front of the high school and at the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

213-2 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, particularly for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

213-3 See response to Comment 120-1 (Bernard Kamoroff) 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. Chapter 5 (FEIS/EIR) addresses 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 City of Willits and Mendocino County throughout final design and construction of the project. Again, Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act criteria because of its overall adverse impact to the environment (General Response 1.3).

7/28/02

To whom it may Concern,

213-1 I wish to express my support of the Truck Scales Interchange versus the Quail Meadows Interchange for the Willits Bypass. Not only is the Truck Scales Interchange a safer, more environmentally sound option, it is also based on a rational assesment of the communities use pattern. Quail meadows as an interchange location increases congestion at the junction of Sherwood Rd. and U.S. 101 which causes a saftey hazard for our local schools.

213-2 Furthermore, the Truck Scales interchange is part of a greater bypass proposal popularly known as Elsie. Elsie combines Alternate L in the South with Alternate C in the North. This proposal is locally planned, and based on a sound knowledge of the local ecology, social use, and business development plans. Although I am sure that you have legitimate reasons behind each proposal, experts and decentralized departments can never comprehend the needs of an ecosystem and a community as well as its inhabitants.

213-3 Please take our recomendations into account as you consider this matter. This is an opportunity for you to show leadorship in the implementation of a plan (the Truck Scales Interchange and Elsie) which is environmentally sound, socially responsible, and saftey concious.

Sincerley,

Holly Wagenet

214 Rosie Wagenet

214-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C ("Elsie") does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

214-2 A two-lane bypass will not be considered because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project (General Response 1.10). See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

214-3 See General Response 1.9 regarding a center valley interchange.

July 28, 2002

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

Attn: Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Coordinator

214-1 I would like to voice my opinion in favor of the Elsie version of the freeway. I am also in favor of the 4-lane freeway. I know that I speak for a great number of people who work in Ukiah, who were not present at any of the meetings regarding the freeway bypass. This is probably because they were just getting home from work and too exhausted to go out and attend another meeting. These are the people who will benefit the most from the 4-lane freeway who are not being heard.

214-2 I am as much concerned about the environmental impacts as those who are so good at making their voices heard. But the 2-lane suggestion is impractical and would be very hazardous to travelers. The savings of dollars and the impact on the environment would not be significant from the 2-lane as opposed to the 4-lane. It is imperative that Willits get the freeway bypass, for the safety and convenience of the citizens. I also urge CalTrans to include The Willits Creek Restoration. This sensible proposal would remove the major negative environmental impact from the Elsie alignment.

214-3 The Elsie version is the ideal route for both people and the environment. The only thing that I would strongly suggest is an exit to Commercial Street, so that those people who live in town will have an easy access to the freeway.

Thank you,

Rosie Wagenet

Rosie Wagenet
P.O. Box 1057
Willits, Ca. 95490

215 Nancy Wallace

215-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C ("ELSIE"), which includes the Truck Scales Interchange, does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

215-2 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR will reduce traffic on local streets including in front of the high school and at the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

215-3 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

215-4 See response to Comment 215-2.

215-5 See response to Comment 215-3 and 212-5 (Hal Wagenet).

215-6 See response to Comment 215-1.

Dear Nancy:

I am writing to voice my concerns about the current northern terminus of the route being proposed by Caltransfor theWillits Bypass.

215-1 Specifically, I am for using the Truck Scales Interchange, the northern terminus of ELSIE, located 1.5 miles north of the town of Willits, east of US 101 between the railroad crossing and the saw mill.

215-2 Your current proposed Quail Meadows Interchange will cause major traffic problems at the intersection of Sherwood Roadand US Hwy 101. Additionally, the Quail Meadows Interchange will negatively impact the High School, and its inherent traffic.

215-3 Moving the interchange to the Truck Scales will enable the Brooktrailstraffic to have a direct and convenient connection, and will provide a true by pass for commuter traffic.

215-4 I point out the very negative impact the Quail Meadows Interchange would have on traffic attempting to travel north onto US 101 from Sherwood Road. The general Brooktrailstraffic, plus the High School traffic would all be accessing that left turn. Sherwood Roadis a narrow,winding two lane road....traffic would back up a mile up Sherwood Road, trying to access that turn. Safety of the residents along Sherwood Roadtrying to enter from their driveways would be compromised. Additionally, the turn is just down from the high school, with the students crossing US 101 at the same intersection. It is a major safety problem for all concerned.

215-5 Why would Caltransreject the plan which is supported by the local people, who are going to be directly effected by this Project, intheir day to day lives. The community of Brooktrailssupports the Truck Scales Interchange site.

This location for the northern terminus is also supported by; the City of Willits, the Board of Supervisors, Mendocino County Sheriff, Willits Police Department, Mendocino Emergency Service Authority, Emergency Medical Services, the California Department of Forestry, the Little Lake Fire Department, the BrooktrailsFire Department, and the Willits Unified School District. It seems that ONLY Caltanswants the Quail Meadows Interchange. If those directly involved have any vote, the Truck Scales Interchange site would be overwhelmingly selected.

215-6 Please select theTruck Scales Interchange as the northern terminus of the Willits Bypass Project.

Thank you.

Nancy J. Wallace, owner

216 Starla Warburton

216-1 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR will reduce traffic on local streets including in front of the high school and at the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives C1T and L/C ("Elsie"), which includes the Truck Scales Interchange (Wild Oat Canyon), do not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for their significant adverse impacts to wetlands and their potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

July 26, 2002

To whom it may concern:

216-1 As a resident of the Willits community for over 25 years I am well aware of how needed a well placed and well planned bypass is. However, the idea of the proposed Quail Meadows bypass is very upsetting. It would be a travelers nightmare for our town. Please do the best and right thing by strongly considering the health and safety of our community first and look

216-1 cont. carefully at the Wild Oat Canyon road interchange. It would be a definite plus for the safety of our community.

Please say "NO" to the proposed Quail Meadows interchange. What a desaster — lawsuits just waiting to happen.

Thank you for your kind consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,

Starla Warburton

217 Ted Coffee Warburton

217-1 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR will reduce traffic on local streets including in front of the high school and at the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternatives C1T and L/C ("ELSIE"), which includes the Truck Scales Interchange, do not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for their overall environmental harm, including adverse impacts to wetlands and federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

July 28, 2002

Dear Nancy & Committee:

217-1 I am writing to state my opposition to the Trail Meadows interchange. It will be a safety nightmare for young people at the high school and all the business folk who live in Brookhaven.

We need people who care about people to listen to our community. We need a SAFE Bypass. Please consider the proposed Wild Oak Canyon Road solution. It would be a fine addition to our community NOT an on-going lawsuit.

Thanking you for your help, I remain,

Ted Coffee Warburton

218 Gerald Ward

218-1 All of the alternatives considered in the DEIS/EIR will reduce traffic on local streets including in front of the high school and at the Main Street/Sherwood Road intersection. See General Response 1.8.

Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C ("ELSIE"), which includes the Truck Scales Interchange, does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its adverse impacts to wetlands and federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

WILLITS SOLID WASTES
MENDOCINO SOLID WASTES
BIO-WASTE COMPOSTING
SOLID WASTE RECYCLING CENTER
WILLITS, LAYTONVILLE
COVELO, WEST PORT

Solid Wastes of Willits,

Post Office Box 1425 • Willits, California

August 5, 2002

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

Re: Willits Bypass

Dear Mr. Khaled,

I am writing on behalf of our Company, Solid Wastes of Willits, Inc. and its 30 employees who travel along the 101 corridor through Willits. We are a franchise refuse and recycling hauler for the City of Willits, Brooktrails Township and the County of Mendocino. Each day our trucks wait in traffic to get to one end of town. The waste in fuel and labor accumulates each day the Willits Bypass is not completed.

218-1 We have been following this bypass proposal for years and support the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon bypass proposal. This particular route is superior to the other routes proposed due to an easier commuter route for all types of traffic, improves safety due to less congestion on Sherwood Road and US 101 and will significantly decrease our truck and labor expenses with collections in the City and Brooktrails area.

We respectfully submit to you that we wish to see a bypass (ELSIE/Wild Oat) as soon as possible and ask that you do not consider any other options including a two lane only bypass.

Sincerely yours,

Gerald W. Ward

GWW/jw

219 Richard Wartell

The following individuals submitted the same form letter:

McWhorter, Kenny
Sweet, James
Wartell, Richard
Wartell, Angela

August 5, 2002

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

219-1
- The EIS/EIR fails to properly identify numerous unavoidable significant impacts a four-lane bypass will have on Willits, Little Lake Valley, and the surrounding communities. These impacts include noise, loss of farmland, loss of oak woodland, loss of wetlands, visual impacts, and impacts on local business. All of these impacts will substantially degrade the character of the area and our quality of life.

219-2
- The EIS/EIR does not include a two-lane alternative as a way to mitigate many of these unavoidable significant impacts. A two-lane bypass would reduce noise and visual impacts. There would also be a reduction in delays and improved safety as compared to any of the proposed four-lane alternatives. The length of time needed to construct a four-lane bypass would subject this area to an unimaginable level of havoc and congestion. A two-lane alternative would have less mitigation costs due to fewer environmental impacts. This combined with overall cost savings would leave more funds available for a second access road to Brooktrails, Willits Creek Restoration, and other roadway maintenance of which Willits is in desperate need.

219-3
- The EIS/EIR does not analyze a tie-in to the Brooktrails Second Access Road. The proposed Wild Oat Canyon Plan should be taken into consideration at this time and evaluated along with bypass alternatives. This discussion must include the cumulative impacts of any newly created traffic circulation pattern.

I recently relocated to this area for the charm and beauty that Willits and Brooktrails provide. As a homeowner the future development of this area is thus of great importance to me. Caltrans needs to respond to the reasonable requests of local citizens and take our concerns into consideration. The people have insight into the usage and traffic patterns of the area and thus are the best advisors as to the most logical, functional, and economic alternative for the Willits Bypass.

219-4 After reviewing the EIS/EIR and the alternatives proposed I find it a necessity for Caltrans to adequately address and reanalyze possible two-lane alternatives for the Willits Bypass. Without a reconsideration of a two-lane alternative the Final EIS/EIR would be a great disservice to the people of

219-1 See response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

219-2 See General Response 1.10, which supplements the DEIS/EIR discussion on why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project. Reducing the four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the footprint by half because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes and drainage facilities. See also response to Comment 73-5 (Mary Delaney).

219-3 Any of the valley alternatives would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6. The cumulative effects of a Brooktrails Township second access were not addressed in the DEIS/EIR because technical studies have not been initiated and the alternatives being proposed are still speculative.

219-4 See response to Comment 219-2.

219-5 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). All of the proposed build alternatives lessen traffic congestion. See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration. The purpose and need for a bypass of Willits does not include improvements to the Willits Wastewater Treatment Plant. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road. A two-lane bypass will not be considered because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project (General Response 1.10).

Richard A. Wartell
26551 Daphne Way, Willits, CA 95490
Phone 707 459-0662 Fax 815 371-0757
rwartell@writeme.com

this community. I believe that the money saved by constructing a two-lane as opposed to a four-lane bypass warrants another look at this option in its own right, apart from the other benefits that would accompany the two-lane alternative.

219-5 If after further evaluation Caltrans decides to move forward with a four-lane bypass the most beneficial and logical alternative would be the "hybrid" plan referred to as The ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon Proposal. This "all encompassing" plan would address multiple needs simultaneously. It would provide a bypass for Highway 101, alleviate traffic congestion, lessen mitigation measures and environmental impacts through the Willits Creek Restoration Plan, coordinate with the City of Willits new sewer plant, and provide a connection to a second access road for Brooktrails. The ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon Plan may in fact be applicable as the preferred route for a two-lane bypass as well.

219-6 In addition, the Final EIS/EIR needs to address the numerous unavoidable significant impacts that were not listed in Chapter 6. Future mitigation measures cannot be left undefined. I am requesting that all of the above impacts and issues be addressed in the Final EIS/EIR. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Richard Wartell

Richard Wartell

219-6 See response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

220 Dave Watts

220-1 See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need of the project and therefore was not considered in the DEIS/EIR.

220-2 See General Response 1.9 regarding center valley interchange.

220-3 See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access. See General Response 1.8 regarding traffic operations with Quail Meadows Interchange.

220-4 When the DEIS/EIR refers to north segment or south segment of any particular alternative, the point of separation is at the nodal point. These nodal points (nodes) were established where the various alternatives could reasonably be connected while maintaining information integrity for the segments. For example, because the nodes for Alternatives LT and C1T are physically located near each other, and because those two alternatives are similarly aligned in that area, the alternatives could reasonably be connected to form the hybrid Alternative L/C. Caltrans believes the impacts, costs, and benefits associated with the hybrid alternative can be reasonably deduced from the segments. The north end of the floodway viaduct was selected as the actual node as a clearly identifiable point on each of the valley alternatives. (A node remains on Alternative E3 from earlier investigations before the valley alternatives were truncated.)

Dave Watts
1094 Locust St.
Willits, CA 95490
707-459-9526

August 23, 2002

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

And

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 been a resident of Mendocino County for over twenty years. I have lived in Willits for all of those years while owning and operating a retail business. I have read the Draft Environmental Impact Statement / Environmental Impact Report for the Willits Bypass and have some comments that I want to share.

As an informational report the DEIS/EIR has omitted some important areas of study and has not explained or delineated other areas sufficiently.

220-1 An objective evaluation of a two-lane alternative as suggested by the Willits Environmental Center was left out of the DRAFT. Would not a two-lane with no cross traffic, wide shoulders, and a physical barrier between the lanes have many benefits? Would not such a two-lane have good safety features, lower noise levels, more options for routing the roadway because of lower speeds, such as through oak riparian woodlands, a smaller footprint by up to 50% for its roadway, smaller interchanges, less cut and fill, and less visual impacts which would all mean less of a total impact to the environment? Isn't the two-lane alternative in the DRAFT that was rejected a different design from that of the Willits Environmental Center?

220-2 The DRAFT omitted any discussion of a SR20/101 interchange in the valley, Why was such a discussion left out? Would not such a feature allow the greatest number of interregional vehicles to bypass Willits main streets thus relieving congestion, delay, and enhancing safety?

The Draft does not address the issue of Brooktrails' traffic in relationship to the valley

No other points were identified because the alignments could not reasonably be connected elsewhere. For example, consider nodes placed on Alternatives J1T and LT where they cross Center Valley Road. The impacts, costs, and benefits for such a hybrid could not reasonably be inferred from the segments because no reasonable connection could be constructed between the segments.

220-5 All of Main Street will see a reduction in traffic levels with the construction of any of the Bypass Alternatives. The level of the reduction will vary depending on the Alternative chosen. Each Alternative scenario will provide a positive impact for Main Street by reducing traffic congestion. The DEIS/EIR lists several technical studies that were used to complete this analysis (page 1-8), one of which was the Willits Bypass Traffic Report. This report details current and future Main Street traffic volumes that are approaching the intersection of S.R. 20 from the north (the Historical Area) and from the south (Miracle Mile) (Willits Traffic Report-Pages 36-48).

220-6 Although the bypass reduces congestion in Willits, the project purpose is not to address local traffic congestion. The Draft Environmental Impact Study lists several technical studies that were used to complete this Study. One of these technical studies was the Willits Bypass Traffic Report. This report shows that the peak hour volume of traffic in each direction of S.R. 20 will be between 200 and 300 vehicles. Between these relatively low volumes and bypass traffic that is diverted away from the intersection of Main Street and S.R. 20, the congestion should be substantially reduced. This reduction would substantially improve traffic conditions in this area.

Caltrans will continue to monitor, assess, and address interregional traffic issues associated with the S.R. 20 corridor and connections; however, S.R. 20 traffic was not included within the scope of this project.

220-7 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). See General Response 1.10, which discusses a two-lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need for the project. See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of a center valley interchange, which is beyond the scope of this project.

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alternatives and in particular its interchange options. Traffic flow from Brooktrails and the
220-3 problem of emergency access to Brooktrails needs to be better studied in the DRAFT. A future access road to Brooktrails will happen, and options such as Wild Oat Canyon must be included in the DRAFT.

What was the rationale for choosing nodal points in the valley wetlands near Mill Creek?
220-4 If such nodal points were intended to help with flexibility and selection of hybrid alternatives than why weren't more nodal points chosen? In particular why were nodal points not chosen somewhere in the middle of the 6.8-mile lengths of valley alternatives? Would not nodal points near a possible SR20/101 junction in the vicinity of Center Valley Road offer more flexibility and hybrid choice?

In addition, the DRAFT breaks down the valley alternatives into North and South parts. Where is the point of separation between North and South on each alternative? Is it at the above mentioned nodal points? Would it not make more sense for the North/South separation to be in the middle of the 6.8-mile lengths of the valley alternatives?

The DRAFT fails to distinguish the different impacts that the various alternatives have on
220-5 the Historical Area of Main Street and the Miracle Mile SR20 portion of Main Street. Why is this distinction not made in the DRAFT? By lumping the two areas together as just "Main Street" it fails to present the true effects of the bypass. The Historical Area of Main Street will receive more positive impacts from a bypass than the Miracle Mile SR20 Main Street corridor for most of the alternatives. Do you agree that only Alt. E3 or a SR20/101 connection in the Valley would benefit both sections of Main Street more or less equally?

The DRAFT needs to make clear that since only about one third of interregional traffic
220-6 will be taken off of Willits streets by a bypass, that there still will be traffic congestion and delay in Willits, especially on the Miracle Mile SR 20 corridor. Why does the DRAFT not make more clear the depth of traffic problems which will still be left with each alternative?

I have a suggestion for an alternative, which is not on the list of already studied and
220-7 dropped alternatives. Alternative Hybrid: four-lane on Alternative LT route to SR20/101 interchange to two-lane on Alternative C1T route or H4L2C.

H4L2C starts with the smallest interchange possible at start of project area near Haehl Creek. It proceeds on the lowest built up roadway possible along Alternate LC route to an interchange at SR20/101. A SR20/101 interchange of the smallest possible footprint would be built at a point just south, as much as possible, of the delineated floodplain and wetlands in the area south of Center Valley Road. After the SR20/101 interchange a two-lane expressway with no cross traffic, wide shoulders, and a physical median barrier would follow Alternate C1T route. The shortest possible length of Floodway Viaduct would be built. The two-lane expressway would go to a small diamond interchange at the Truck Scales near Wild Oat Canyon. After the Truck Scales the project would end at the existing two-lane 101.

A study of Alternative H4L2C would very likely show that it meets the needs and

220-8

purposes of the project. Alternative H4L2C would most likely be within the projected budget constraints and have the least environmental impacts of any alternative

I request that Caltrans amend the DEIS/EIR, with all of the above omitted issues and include Alternate H4L2C, before it continues in the process of choosing a preferred alternative for the project. The DRAFT is the principle tool or informational report, which public agencies and the public will use to make a decision and hence it must be complete and have full disclosure of the "least environmentally damaging practicable alternatives." Will Caltrans amend the DEIS/EIR before it continues the process of choosing a preferred alternative?

Thank you for your time, effort, and attention to my concerns and questions.

Sincerely,

Dave Watts

220-8 See response to Comment 220-7. The DEIS/EIR provided full disclosure of impacts due to the project. Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative) includes some alignment shifts to avoid and/or reduce community and biological impacts. Because it does not propose substantial changes that would pose new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified significant effects, an amendment to the DEIS/EIR is not necessary.

220-9 Chapter 10 (DEIS/EIR) lists the members of the Willits PDT.

220-10 The DEIS/EIR lists several technical studies that were used to complete this analysis (page 1-8), one of which was the Willits Bypass Traffic Report. This report defines LOS standards, criteria and sources. Additionally, the report cites the Highway Capacity Manual (Special Report 209 - Third Edition, Transportation Research Board, National Research Council. Washington D.C., 1998) methodology as a component from which the LOS levels were derived. The Highway Capacity Manual is the accepted federal standard for determining LOS levels. In Chapter 2 (DEIS/EIR) Purpose and Need for Project, a detailed description of LOS is provided.

220-11 Strategic Highway Network(STRAHNET): This is a network of highways which are important to the United States' strategic defense policy and which provide defense access, continuity and emergency capabilities for defense purposes. This network is part of the National Highway System, which establishes federal-aid funding eligibility. This designation does not specifically establish design parameters; however, these designations along with traffic volume, safety, and operations influence the application of design standards.

220-12 The Route Concept Report Route 101 Corridor was updated in October 2002. Route Concept Reports (RCR) are planning documents which describe the Department's conceptual improvement options for a given transportation route or corridor for the 20-yr planning horizon, and beyond. Two segments of existing 2-lane highway are no longer proposed for improvement in the October 2002 RCR. These segments differ from the Willits Bypass in a number of ways. For example, they traverse through State Parks, have relatively low traffic volumes, have little local road access needs, and little support exists for the expensive improvements required to upgrade these segments to 4-lanes. Finally, in the foreseeable future, we do not expect these segments to require 4-lanes due to increased traffic volumes. However, if conditions change, the RCR could change to address future needs.

220-13 Collision rates for a facility as suggested are not available because there is no such breakdown in the statewide database. However, collision statistics in a construction zone, such as the segment of U.S. 101 south of the Golden Rule property, do not correspond with collision statistics for the same segment not under construction. It should be further noted that improvement projects on Ridgewood Grade to construct segments of four-lane expressway were proposed due to elevated collision rates. General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane facility does not meet the purpose and need of the proposed bypass project.

220-14 The bypass will reduce traffic on local streets, including the Miracle Mile; however, the north segment of Main Street will see a higher reduction in through truck traffic, because westbound S.R. 20 truck traffic traveling

south on U.S. 101 is expected to exit at the Haehl Creek Interchange; currently this traffic travels south on Main Street to access the S.R. 20/Main Street intersection.

I have the following specific referenced questions:

220-9	1-4,1.3	Who will be the "other interested bodies" on the PDT? Will the Willits Environmental Center and or the Native Plant Society have a representative?
220-10	2-2	Because the LOS criteria is so important to this project its use and justification must be spelled out. What other States or Countries use this particular LOS criteria? Are there other LOS systems that could be used?
220-11	2-3,2.2.1	What does the "Strategic Highway Network" designation mean for the project? What design parameters if any does this designation have for the project?
220-12	.2-5,2.2.2	Is not it time to update the Caltrans Route Concept Report to give it even more flexibility in dealing with rural area concerns and values? Does not the four-lane concept to Oregon cause Caltrans to unnecessarily find reasons why a non-four-lane alternative must be rejected?
220-13	2-7,2.2.3	What are the collision rates for a two-lane freeway with no cross traffic, a barrier between lanes, wide shoulders, and moderate speeds with the same ADT used on this page? What is the collision rate for the past year on the temporary two-lane barrier divided roadway on the bumpy and curvy section south of the Golden Rule on existing 101? Would not a two lane in the flat valley with wide shoulders be even safer than that stretch?
220-14	2-8,2.2.5	Noise and vibration will be less only on the Historical Area of main and not for the Miracle Mile length of main. Why doesn't the DRAFT point that out?
220-15	2-8,2.2.6	There will be still lots of traffic volume on the SR20 Miracle corridor for all but one of the alternatives, E3, compared to the Historical Area corridor. Why does the DRAFT not indicate that for bicyclists, pedestrians, and for less automobile-oriented groups the Miracle Mile Corridor will still be unsafe for them? Note: There are two senior living complexes near the Miracle Mile corridor and the Willits Senior Center.
220-16	2-9,2.3	Why were the Historical Area and the Miracle Mile corridor not separated out for their respective reductions in delays? "Downtown traffic is to vague a term. Why did Caltrans not do any traffic volume studies during the school year? What are the commute traffic volumes for the areas points of origin such as Pine Mountain, Brooktrails, or Ridgewood Grade out of Muir Canyon Road?
220-17	2-13	Table 2-3 showing the breakdown in costs for the different alternatives but does not indicate where the North and South segments begin and end. Will that be changed?

220-15 The DEIS/EIR (page 1-8) lists several technical studies that were used to complete this analysis, one of which was the Willits Bypass Traffic Report. This report shows that the peak hour volume of traffic in each direction of S.R. 20 will be from 200 to 300 vehicles. Between these relatively low volumes and bypass traffic that is diverted away from the intersection of Main Street and S.R. 20, the congestion should be substantially reduced. As a result, conflicts would be reduced.

Additionally, the DEIS/EIR addresses the concern of bicycle and pedestrian traffic in several areas of Willits, including the Miracle Mile. The report goes on to state that the reduction in traffic resulting from the bypass would substantially improve traffic conditions that would reduce conflicts between vehicles and pedestrians (see Chapter 2, Section 2.2.6).

220-16 The DEIS/EIR (page 1-8) lists several technical studies that were used to complete this analysis, one of which was the Willits Bypass Traffic Report. This report discusses delay by segment, which includes the Miracle Mile area.

Traffic Counts were conducted in April 1998 (during school year) and in July 1998. Field review has shown that the bottleneck for the northbound traffic-approaching S.R. 20 on U.S. 101 is a significant source of congestion. Average peak hour traffic often backs-up south of Holly Street. This condition is more pronounced during recreational weekends. Because the bottleneck meters traffic to the U.S. 101/S.R. 20 intersection, fewer vehicles are able to reach the intersection. Intersection LOS calculations examine an intersection as an isolated system, not accounting for activity up or down stream. Delay associated with the long queue extending south of the bottleneck is not calculated into the intersection analysis and is therefore not reflected in the intersection LOS results. This intersection currently calculates at LOS D with its current volume and LOS F if the delay associated with the bottleneck queues immediately upstream of the intersection were accounted for in the intersection analysis (DEIS/EIR, page 22).

Additionally, the study was conducted and produced to evaluate the costs and benefits of developing a bypass. Therefore, measures such as traffic delay were evaluated for the traffic system overall, not local traffic specifically.

220-17 As with all information presented in accordance with the "nodal approach" (Section 1.5, DEIS/EIR), costs for the north and south segments of the alternatives are separated at the node (Map 3, DEIS/EIR Volume 2). Please note, however, that the costs indicated for the north and south segments in Table 2-3 (DEIS/EIR) are reversed. Volume 3 (FEIS/EIR) corrects cost information by node. Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) provides current estimated cost for Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative).

220-18	3-1	Footnote #4 explains why the north end alternatives were shortened to the existing two-lanes to save money. Couldn't the same reasoning be used to have a two-lane portion for some of the new bypass from Center Valley Road to the mentioned existing two-lane?
220-19	3-3	Will Caltrans use "aggregate concrete" or "open-graded asphalt" for the road surface layers? Can Caltrans commit to using the noise reducing "open-graded asphalt" as discussed on page 5-145?
220-20	3-11	Under discussion of structures a Floodway Viaduct is mentioned. How far down must the posts go down? Is there "structurally competent material" for them to go into to as mentioned on page 5-3 under Geo-5? Is it possible for the posts to alter the water table by piercing a clay water holding medium?
220-21	3-31	Isn't the two -lane alternative rejected here different in design from the two-lane alternative suggested by the Willits Environmental Center? Can not a two lane handle 2,300 vehicles per peak hour? If that is the case then if a four-lane in 2028 will have only 1,050 vehicles per peak hour, is that not an over design and waste of our resources?
220-22	5-10,5.2.5.1	"Community cohesion" would not be improved for the Miracle Mile SR20 corridor except under the E3 alternative. Will Caltrans correct the impression that decreased traffic will have the same positive results for "cohesion" for both the Historical Area and the Miracle Mile corridor?
220-23	5-29	FRM-1 speaks about an "agricultural conservation easement…in perpetuity." Where has this been done before? Can it be done here? I have the same questions on BIO-2 on page 5-66 with a conservation easement.
220-24	5-51	FP-3 reduced the median width to 45' to reduce the footprint on the floodplain. Why can't the median width be reduced even further to say four feet with a physical barrier? This is done on many stretches of 101 now.
220-25	5-51	FP-4 with tight diamond interchanges could be used on all the interchanges, correct? Could this concept be used with a two-lane design also?
220-26	5-67	BIO-8 is very inadequate. The survival rate would be very poor and it would take much to long to mature be a viable mitigation. All oak woodlands and other tree communities must be removed as little as possible. Would not a two-lane be better able to avoid tree removal?
220-27	5-69	BIO-11 has not been proven effective so it cannot be used as a mitigation measure. True?

220-18 A two-lane bypass within the project area would not meet the purpose and need for the project (General Response 1.10). Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) discusses project funding.

220-19 Open-graded asphalt is a design feature on all of the build alternatives except on bridges and the viaduct.

220-20 The proposed viaduct portion of the preferred Modified Alternative J1T will require the development and construction of large diameter piers for structural support. Construction methods will take into account the presence of groundwater. Piles will likely be constructed either using a slurry displacement method or be Cast-in-Steel-Shell (CISS) piles. Both methods of construction have the effect of 'sealing' off the sidewall of the soil matrix as the hole is developed for construction. The slurry mixture tends to seal the sidewall of the soil matrix as the slurry develops a 'gel cake' along the soil walls. CISS piles are driven into the ground to provide an isolated casing in which the pile is constructed. As the pile is driven, soil adheres to the pile and a friction is developed along the pile and the soil sidewall. The developed friction is an important factor in determining ultimate pile strength. This also has the effect of sealing the flow path between the pile and soil voids. Therefore, the potential for downward flow of groundwater as a result of pile construction is very low to insignificant. Additionally, the underlying aquifer is more compact with a very low yield compared to the over-lying aquifer. This also suggests that the potential for downward flow of groundwater is low and given the physical characteristics of the aquifer would proceed at a very slow, if measurable, rate. Piles will need to be driven to a depth where competent material exists. The depth will be based on exploratory drilling and could go as deep as 15 m (50 ft) or more.

220-21 See General Response 1.10 for discussion of a two lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

220-22 See response to Comment 221-2 (Jenny Watts).

220-23 Conservation easements have been identified by both federal and state agencies (NRCS and DOC), which oversee farmland conservation and protection, as one of the best tools for agricultural land protection. This tool has also been used to help protect and mitigate for wetlands and habitat for listed species. Organizations such as Ducks Unlimited, Mendocino Land Trust, Marin Agricultural Land Trust have used this conservation tool to protect agricultural lands and wildlife habitat.

220-24 See General Response 1.13 for a discussion of median width.

220-25 The DEIS/EIR included two interchanges that were not tight diamonds. Haehl Creek Interchange, which is common to the valley alternatives, was originally a trumpet interchange. Hollands Lane Interchange, on Alternative E3, was a spread diamond. Since public circulation of the DEIS/EIR, Caltrans changed the layout of Haehl Creek Interchange to a tight diamond because of access issues for a private landowner adjacent to the interchange.

Applying standard design for ramps to an interchange on a two-lane facility would essentially convert it to a four-lane facility. General Response 1.10 discusses why a two-lane facility does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

220-26 Modified Alternative J1T (the identified Preferred Alternative) minimizes impacts to the large oak riparian woodland in the project area. See General Response 1.10 for discussion of why a two-lane bypass does not meet the purpose and need of the project and therefore is not a feasible alternative for construction. Further, reducing a four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the footprint substantially because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities.

220-27 See response to Comment 27-6 (California Native Plant Society). As stated in mitigation measure BIO-11, CDFG is expected to apply rigorous success criteria to creation efforts for Baker's meadowfoam stands. Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative) reduces impacts to Baker's meadowfoam.

220-28	5-85	Where do North and South start and begin on the chart shown? That placement could change how the chart looks. Was it at the nodal points?
220-29	Several	There is no discussion of irrigation and long term care for any of the BIO mitigations or landscape plans for trees, shrubs, and groundcover. When will Caltrans offer specific plant and irrigation plans?
220-30	5-118	The Visual Quality table is very subjective. A four lane freeway 123' wide on raised roadways, bridges, and viaducts will be very intrusive in the valley. Concrete and other structures will alter forever the valley's beauty. Is there not a more accurate system of quantifying the visual impacts to represent their impact more accurately?
220-31	5-164	For Table 5-31 the level of impact after mitigation must be changed to S for Visual Resources for all the alternatives.
220-32	5-138	What is the history of Table 5-22 on Noise Abatement Criteria? This table does not have an accurate category for rural residential. This chart seems to have been made for urban areas. True? If this chart is used then rural residential must go into category A, because that matches most closely with rural values and realities. True?
220-33	5-164	For Table 5-31 the level of impact for noise on long term residential and School noise must be changed to S for both before mitigation and after mitigation.

220-28 The chart on page 5-85 shows impacts to jurisdictional waters of the U.S. by segment, using the nodal approach (Section 1.5, DEIS/EIR).

220-29 The Visual Impact Assessment technical document addresses the visual concerns of the project and recommends appropriate mitigation measures to reduce impacts. This document includes general planting concepts. Specific planting plans along with irrigation drawings were not included in the DEIS/EIR because this level of detail is not prepared until a preferred alternative is identified.

220-30 Project specific impacts were evaluated and graded by considering a 'before' and 'after' scenario for each visually significant viewshed. Visual simulations were prepared to depict in detail the impacts of each viewshed. Therefore, the impact of each alternative was evaluated based upon its individual visual characteristics.

220-31 With the exception of Alternative E-3, which requires the most earthwork, all other alternatives offer a variety of visual experiences. Each alternative contains segments of near grade alignment as well as raised sections and structures. The visual impacts of each segment were assessed with appropriate mitigation measures tailored to viewers of each area. Therefore, not all portions of an alternative were found to contain the same or similar visual impacts. Additionally, the visual impacts of the current congested highway along with more future congestion were weighed against the visual impacts of the proposed project.

220-32 The Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) shown as Table 5-22 is from Table 1 found in the United States Code of Federal Regulations Part 772 (23 CFR 772) "Procedures for Abatement of Highway Traffic Noise and Construction Noise" This criteria is used for both urban and rural areas in all 50 of the United States.

220-33 Based on CEQA guidelines and Caltrans noise analysis guidelines, Table 5-31 correctly shows the impacts for both long term residential and school noise impacts. To be considered a potentially significant impact under CEQA, the noise levels must increase 12 dBA above the existing noise levels. If this occurs, then the "context and intensity" of the impact must be analyzed to determine significance.

221 Jenny Watts

Jenny Watts
1094 Locust St.
Willits, CA 95490
707-459-9009

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:

I have been a resident of Mendocino County for over twenty years and I am a proprietor of a small business in Willits. I have a Masters degree from Stanford University in Operations Research and worked for several years at Arthur D. Little, Inc., a consulting firm, preparing Economic Impact Studies.

221-1 In my experience, independent consulting firms who do not have an interest in the outcome of the analysis prepare Environmental Impact Statements. In this case it seems that Caltrans has been the primary preparer of this DEIS/DEIR. Caltrans clearly has its own partiality about building a four-lane freeway all the way to the Oregon border, so their analysis has likely been influenced by this bias. Why doesn't Caltrans hire an independent consulting firm to prepare the DEIS/DEIR who has no interest in the outcome of the study? Isn't this a conflict of interest for Caltrans?

I have read the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Willits Bypass, and have found the following omissions, contradictions and issues that need to be addressed. I offer these comments:
Page, reference:

221-2 5-10, 5.2.5.1 "Because construction of the project would result in decreased traffic volumes along Main Street, community cohesion could increase." This is only true for the northern stretch of Main Street, north of S.R. 20. With Alternatives C1T, J1T or LT, there would still be heavy traffic on the "Miracle Mile", especially since all trucks going to and from Fort Bragg, either to the north or south of Willits, would have to traverse the "Miracle Mile" as the northern stretch would be closed to truck traffic. Therefore, the project as planned without an interchange at Highway 20 would only result in increased community cohesion on the northern stretch, roughly half of the town, and no community cohesion in the south section of Main Street. Why wasn't this stated clearly in the DEIR?

221-3 5-17, 5.2.5.5 The industrial park on Sanhedrin Circle [N.B. Sanhedrin is misspelled in the report as San Hedrin] houses three relatively large employers. It

221-1 The decision to study a four-lane bypass is not based on opinion or bias. See General Response 1.10, which discusses a two-lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need for the project. This discussion expands on the same explanation that was provided in the DEIS/EIR (Section 3.6.2). Once the reasonable range of alternatives were established and received concurrence from the NEPA/404 resource agencies, detailed studies of these alternatives were prepared. The DEIS/EIR is a document of disclosure that summarizes the results of the environmental studies that were conducted independently by professionals in their respective fields.

221-2 By moving the intersection of S.R. 20 and U.S. 101 to the west of Willits, Alternative E3 would provide an increase in community cohesion in the City, because this alternative would remove all through traffic from the Willits community. With the valley alternatives, community cohesion along Main Street north of S.R. 20 would likely increase with a decrease in congestion on this stretch of Main Street. But because through traffic would continue to utilize S.R. 20 along the "Miracle Mile," traffic volumes would continue to separate the eastern and western sides of the community south of the S.R. 20/Main Street intersection.

221-3 The comment is noted that "Sanhedrin Circle" is the correct spelling. Alternative J1T would require the relocation of the three businesses in the Sanhedrin Circle business park; however, it would not be possible to relocate the business park "intact." The existing business park was developed with Community Development Block Grant funds; the lengthy and expensive process of establishing another business park would have to be reinitiated. Removal of the business park would disrupt the City's long-term plans for economic development. The preferred alternative (Modified Alternative J1T) is a revision of Alternative J1T to avoid the business park.

221-4 The loss of some portion of the tourist dollar currently spent in Willits would have multiplier effects within the community. On the other hand, the removal of undesirable traffic, especially large trucks, through the downtown area holds the potential for attracting new businesses and shoppers to the downtown area. And, in the short term, construction expenditures will also have multiplier effects on the local and regional economy.

Caltrans staff prepared an Economic Impact Report for the proposed project, including a model of projected economic growth after construction of a bypass. The model utilized projected traffic changes resulting from the proposed project, combined with the effects of construction expenditures and efforts by the City of Willits to revitalize downtown businesses. The model produced "normalized" results. In other words, rather than producing a dollar amount that would equate to the economic cost or benefit to the community, the model produced a measure of the level of growth that could be expected under each alternative compared to the No Build Alternative.

would not be easy to relocate these businesses, as there are no comparable properties in the City. Therefore, this is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for alternative J1T.

221-4 5-21, first paragraph: When businesses fail, there is a multiplier effect felt by the local community. Every dollar of primary income is expected to circulate between 2.5 and 4.8 times in the community. Thus the potential loss of business from tourist dollars has a much greater effect on the local economy than the DEIS/DEIR indicates. Therefore, this is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all the alternatives. What are the actual dollar figures for economic impact of the proposed bypass on the Willits economy?

221-5 5-30, 5.4.6.1 The 131.4 acres of Prime and Unique Farmland that would be impacted by C1T and the 61.5 acres that would be impacted by LT are "Unavoidable Significant Impacts" for alternatives C1T and LT since the implementation of FRM-3 is unfeasible.

221-6 5-52 to 5-58 Viewshed A, Alternatives C1T, J1T and LT, Upper Haehl Creek Separation. This is a very significant visual impact.

221-7 Viewshed F, Alternative J1T at the Baseball fields. This is a very significant visual impact.

221-8 Viewshed I, Alternatives J1T and LT at Quail Meadows Interchange. This is a very significant visual impact completely obscuring the rural vista.

221-9 The Overpasses at 16 to 26 feet high and fill slopes that are visible from Viewshed G constitute a significant visual impact.

221-10 There is no mention of how traffic will cross the proposed bypass alternatives at East Hill Road. Is there going to be an overpass at East Hill Road? What would be the cost of building this overpass? Was this figured into the cost estimates for Alternatives C1T, J1T and LT?

221-11 5-55 The information in the last paragraph, stating "South of Center Valley Road, the alignment would be up to about 2m (7 ft) above the surrounding area." conflicts with information on page 5-130, J1T: Miracle Mile LAU, which states, "The bypass would change the views since it places 10 m (33 ft) high fill slopes in this area." This is a very significant difference! Also, no mention is made of this visual impact in 5.10.5.1 Alternative C1T or in 5.10.5.3 Alternative LT. How high will the roadway be south of Center Valley Road for each valley Alternative?

The Willits economy is expected to grow, whether or not the proposed project is constructed, with growth estimated at 72 percent over the next 20 years. Alternative E3 is expected to be the least beneficial to the Willits economy, since it would remove S.R. 20 from the City. Twenty years after construction of Alternative E3, the local economy would be expected to grow by 81 percent. Alternatives C1T, J1T, and LT are expected to result in growth on the order of 116 percent twenty years after construction (a net improvement on the order of 45 percent over the No Build Alternative).

221-5 See responses to Comments 34-60 and 34-63 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning) regarding feasibility of mitigation measure FRM-3.

221-6 The DEIS/EIR (pages 5-119 and 5-129) discusses the visual quality with and without the Haehl Creek interchange. Mitigation measures VIS-1 through VIS-10 include the planting of indigenous oak woodland species to blend with the existing hillside landscapes. No change to the DEIS/EIR is required.

221-7 The impact of Alternative J1T to the ball fields would be reduced with mitigation measures VIS-1 through VIS-10. The preferred alternative (Modified Alternative J1T) has shifted Alternative J1T to the east further from the ball fields behind an existing visual buffer of tall, dense riparian vegetation.

221-8 This impact will be the highest to the Quail Meadows RV Park. These views for residents there, however, will be buffered by the existing trees and orchards, and therefore, will not result in a significant impact.

221-9 Viewshed “G” is within some of the flatter areas of the project. The views in this viewshed will be buffered by the existing tree-lined streets and ranches and, therefore, would not result in a significant impact.

221-10 For the valley alternatives, the freeway will cross over East Hill Road. The structures (one in each direction) are called the East Hill Road Undercrossing, where the local road crosses under the freeway. There is no access from East Hill Road to the freeway at this undercrossing. The costs (2002) for the structures are estimated at approximately $1.4 million for Alternative C1T, $1.8 million for J1T, and $1.6 million for LT and Modified Alternative J1T. These costs were included in the cost estimates for the project in the DEIS/EIR.

221-11 Design has reviewed the profiles and finds that in the area from just north of East Hill Road to just south of the Floodway Viaduct (north of Center Valley Road), the profile for Modified Alternative J1T (the Preferred Alternative) would be about 2 m (7 ft) above the surrounding area. The other valley alternatives had similar heights. Alternative C1T would be approximately 2 m (7 ft) high, and Alternatives J1T and LT would be about 2 m to 3 m high from East Hill Road to Center Valley Road.

221-12		Given the above-mentioned visual impacts, I feel that Visual Impacts are an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all the valley alternatives, C1T, J1T and LT.
221-13	5-66 & 67	BIO-1: The Mitigation and Monitoring Plan referred to will likely involve substantial issues that the public should have the right to review. Absence of specific mitigation measures in this DEIR renders this document incomplete and not a full disclosure of mitigation plans for this project. When will the public be able to review and comment on a completed DEIR?
221-14	5-68	BIO-8: The planting of acorns to mitigate old growth oak woodland is completely inadequate as a mitigation measure. There are hundreds of oak seedlings each year in oak woodlands that never survive to become trees. Does Caltrans have any experience with the success of the proposed planting? Where was such a planting done? The removal of portions of the largest oak woodland in the valley, on the Colli Ranch, is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for alternatives C1T and LT.
221-15	5-83	Baker's Meadowfoam: Efforts to establish Baker's Meadowfoam in new areas is still experimental. It is unknown exactly what the plants need in the way of periodic inundation to survive as healthy populations over the long term. As far as is currently known, there would be an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" to Baker's Meadowfoam caused by alternatives C1T, J1T and LT.
221-16	5-88	Since the BIO Mitigation Measures have not yet been designed, we have to conclude that there would be an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" to the wetlands for all the valley alternatives, C1T, J1T and LT.
221-17	5-138 & M-2	The Noise Abatement Criteria (NAC) for the Willits area should be changed to Activity Category A for any of the rural receptors in the DEIR. Activity Category A is described as "Lands on which serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance..." To local rural residents, serenity and quiet are of extraordinary significance. That is why many people have chosen to live here. Why is B(67) justified for use through rural farmland and rural residential when A(57) meets the criteria of "serenity and quiet" that are so essential to the rural nature of the area? Using a noise level threshold of A(57), 30 of the 65 noise receptors approach or exceed A(57) for C1T; 35 of the 65 noise receptors approach or exceed A(57) for J1T; and 35 of the 65 noise receptors approach or exceed A(57) for LT. Therefore Noise is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all the valley alternatives, C1T, J1T and LT.
221-18	5-140	How does the "2000 Annual Average Daily Truck Traffic on California State Highway System" compare with Willits' actual traffic? Do we have

221-12 See response to Comments 34-78 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning). No change to the DEIS/EIR is required.

221-13 See response to Comment 144-1 (Jason Minton). See also General Response 1.14 regarding project mitigation.

The final determination of the feasibility of mitigation measures is made by the lead agency when it prepares the "findings of fact" for each environmental impact and mitigation measure identified in the DEIS/EIR. The public review period for the DEIS/EIR, which included draft mitigation measures, ended in August 2002. The findings of fact will be available to the public.

221-14 The Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative because it would result in the least overall environmental harm compared to the other build alternatives. This alternative minimizes impacts to the oak riparian forest referred to in the comment. See response to Comment 27-3 (California Native Plant Society).

221-15 See response to Comment 27-6 (California Native Plant Society).

221-16 A mitigation and monitoring plan for Modified Alternative J1T is being developed with input from resource agencies. Appendix A (FEIS/EIR) includes a conceptual mitigation plan. While a detailed mitigation and monitoring plan could not be developed prior to identification of a Preferred Alternative, technical studies, professional judgment, and coordination with resource agencies guided the impact conclusions summarized in the DEIS/EIR. No change to the DEIS/EIR is required. See also response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch). The goal of the Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) process is to arrive at an alternative that will result in the least overall environmental harm. Through this process, the Modified Alternative J1T was developed and identified as the Preferred Alternative because it minimizes impacts to wetlands while avoiding community and other resources (General Response 1.3). During final design, Caltrans may identify other ways to reduce environmental impacts of this alternative.

221-17 The Noise Abatement Criteria used for the Willits area is correctly shown as activity category "B" which included the following: Picnic areas, recreation areas, playgrounds, active sport areas, parks, residences, motels, hotels, schools, churches, libraries and hospitals.

221-18 According to the Willits Bypass DEIS/EIR (Section 2.2.4), the truck traffic ranges from 5% to 10%. This percentage range varies, depending on the area of town that is observed. According to the DEIS/EIR, trucks made up 5% of the traffic north of S.R. 20 and 10% of the truck traffic south of S.R. 20.

		92% autos and only 5% heavy trucks? I believe we have a larger percentage of heavy trucks that would make the Noise projections greater than the figures used to determine Noise impacts. What projection was used to get volumes for the year 2028?
221-19	5-145	Caltrans needs to make a commitment in the EIR to using "open graded asphalt" in order to conclude that the noise impacts on receptors 3, 4 and 104 "would be reduced to below a substantial noise increase." Isn't it true that slower traffic speeds and a two-lane alternative would significantly lower the noise impacts for all areas? Will Caltrans be using "open graded asphalt" on the Willits bypass Alternatives? Noise is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all the alternatives.
221-20	6-12, 6.2.2.5	The potential for growth inducement and commercial development around the interchanges is a significant adverse impact to the integrity of the downtown commercial area. Therefore, Growth Inducement is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all the alternatives.
221-21	6-13, 6.2.3.2	Alternatives LT and C1T will have an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" on the "oak riparian corridor near Center Valley Road" (see page H-45), the oak woodland on the Colli Ranch. This is the last remnant of the oak forest that once covered the valley. Why wasn't this mentioned in the Cumulative Impact portion of the report? This coupled with previous clearing and conversion constitutes a Significant Cumulative Impact to Riparian Oak Woodlands. Mitigation measures proposed are extremely long-term and therefore do not remove the cumulative impact. However, a two-lane bypass could easily circumvent this sensitive area. How will Caltrans save this important oak woodland?
221-22	6-15, 6.2.3.4	As mentioned before, the transplanting and reseeding of Baker's Meadowfoam is still experimental and has not been highly successful in the experience of CDFG. Therefore, the cumulative impact that the valley alternatives will have on Baker's Meadowform populations is an "Unavoidable Significant Impact".
221-23	6-18, 6.2.5	The project's impact on Prime Farmland constitutes a Significant Cumulative Impact on farmlands.
221-24	Glossary A-7	Reasonableness (of noise abatement) The "multitude of factors" does not seem to be spelled out anywhere in the DEIR for the public to understand and make comment on. What are the "multitude of factors" referred to?
221-25	Appendix C	It is my understanding that the list of mitigation measures included in this appendix may be subject to modification at the time a Final Mitigation Plan is developed. I am concerned that the final mitigation measures may

221-19 Open-graded asphalt, except on bridges and the viaduct, is a design feature on all of the build alternatives considered for the Willits bypass project. See also response to Comment 221-1 above and 73-5 (Mary Delaney).

221-20 See General Response 1.12 regarding "growth at interchanges."

221-21 Alternative LT, not C1T, would result in the removal of the oak riparian corridor referred to in the comment. To reduce impacts where Alternative LT would cross the woodland, Caltrans working with resource agencies proposed a viaduct on Alternative LT at that location, which would reduce impacts to the woodland and also would maintain wildlife passage. However, the preferred alternative (Modified Alternative J1T) avoids the referenced oak riparian woodland. See Chapter 2 (FEIS/EIR) for a description of Modified Alternative J1T and Appendix A (FEIS/EIR) for mitigation measures. See General Response 1.10, which explains why a two-lane bypass is not proposed for construction because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project.

221-22 See response to Comment 27-6 (California Native Plant Society).

221-23 The comment does not provide substantiating information. See response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

221-24 See response to Comment 9-73 (City of Willits).

221-25 See response to Comment 221-13.

221-26 Regarding adequacy of the impact analyses in the DEIS/EIR, see response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch). See also responses to Comments 221-2 through 221-24. Also, the reader is referred to Chapters 5 and 6 (DEIS/EIR) where the individual and cumulative impacts of each resource are discussed.

221-27 See General Response 1.10 for more discussion on a two-lane alternative and why it does not meet the purpose and need for the project. A two-lane alternative would not reduce impacts by 50 percent, given design requirements including shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. No change to the DEIS/EIR is required.

221-28 See General Response 1.9 for a discussion of why an S.R. 20 interchange is not being considered for the valley alternatives.

See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

221-29 See response to Comment 300-3 (David Hatton) and General Response 1.13 for a discussion of median width.

not reflect the measures contained in this DEIR and that the public will not have a chance to review and provide comments to these changes.

221-26

6-18, 6.4 Please add to your list of an "Unavoidable Significant Impacts":

1) Visual Resource Impact	C1T, J1T and LT
2) Noise [Long-term residential noise impacts]	C1T, J1T and LT
3) Riparian Oak Woodland	C1T and LT
4) Baker's Meadowfoam	C1T, J1T and LT
5) Growth Inducement	C1T, J1T and LT
6) Loss of Local Business	all alternatives
7) Prime Farmland Cumulative Impact	C1T, J1T and LT
8) Baker's Meadowfoam Cumulative Impact	C1T, J1T and LT
9) Riparian Oak Woodland Cumulative Impact	C1T and LT

221-27

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 four-lane bypass. Level of Service "C" is an arbitrary, unsupportable and unnecessary condition. Even based on Caltrans' projected traffic volumes through 2028, the Level of Service on a two-lane bypass would be similar to the Level of Service currently experienced on the two-lane section of 101 between the north City Limits and Reynolds Highway, which is quite acceptable. Building a two-lane bypass instead would significantly reduce many of the "Unavoidable Significant Impacts" caused by a four-lane bypass, such as noise and visual impacts, and impacts on riparian oak woodland, Baker's Meadowfoam, and prime farmland . I strongly request that Caltrans include in a revised DEIR a thorough study of two-lane alternatives. When will we be able to review a DEIR on the two-lane alternative?

221-28

Caltrans seems reluctant to sit down with local officials and formulate a plan that will address local transportation needs in conjunction with the through traffic objectives that are so important to Caltrans. Any plan that does not address the traffic that goes through Willits and on to Fort Bragg via S.R. 20 has not addressed the overall traffic needs. A glaring omission in the DEIR is that there is no discussion of a Highway 20 interchange with any of the valley alternatives. This must be addressed in a revised DEIR. In addition, a plan that does not anticipate a convenient connection to Brooktrails traffic also has not addressed one of the major sources of traffic in the Willits area. Therefore, an interchange at the Wild Oat Canyon future access road to Brooktrails must be included in the DEIR. When will we be able to review a DEIR on the Wild Oat Canyon Interchange Alternative?

221-29

If a four-lane alternative is ultimately chosen, then I believe that the narrowest four-lane roadway must be built through Little Lake Valley. As designed in the present DEIR, the roadway would be a 120-foot wide footprint going through the valley. Why can't the footprint be made as small as possible by narrowing the median between the two directions of traffic to ten to twelve feet with or without a barrier? Caltrans just

221-30 See response to Comment 73-1.

completed such a roadway along Highway 101 between the southern boundary of Mendocino County and Squaw Rock. Why haven't we been presented with such an Alternative?

221-30 In conclusion, our family moved to Willits because of its unique rural character. In particular, the tranquility and quiet of the area are very important to us. Any increase in the existing noise level created by the bypass is a significant impact that will substantially alter the natural qualities of the Willits area. Likewise, the beautiful natural vistas are an important part of the unique quality of life that the area offers. Regardless of Caltrans' efforts to mitigate visual impacts, a freeway going through Little Lake Valley will have a significant impact on the rural character and beauty of the area.

I am requesting that all of the above impacts and issues be addressed in a revised DEIS/DEIR.

Sincerely,

Jenny Watts

Jenny Watts

222 John Weber

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

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.

Noise

222-1 A four lane highway would have a negative effect on my families quality of life, as we highly value peace and quiet. At times my partner and I, can already hear the existing highway from our home on Pine Mountain, which faces the Willits valley. All the alternatives I have seen so far, except for a two lane highway proposed and supported by local people would significantly increase the existing noise level. Noise must be listed as an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all alternatives in Chapter 6.

Visual Impact

222-2 The Little Lake Valley will never be the same if a four lane highway is running through it. It's beauty will be lost forever. I have noted the 10 mitigation measures that Caltrans has listed in an effort to preserve our natural beauty. A four lane highway of any of the alternatives presently proposed would significantly damage the local habitat and beauty. Visual impact must be listed as an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all alternatives in Chapter 6.

222-3 The "L" and "C" route ending at the truck scales as proposed by Mr. Wagenet definitely serves Willits citizens more efficiently than any other route and provides for much needed additional exit from Brooktrails area. Highway 20 should be accesses by exit from the bypass.

High Cost

222-4 All alternatives listed are high cost and beyond budget. As a taxpayer I want to see our money spent well. Please come up with an alternative that is cost effective.

Valley Oak Woodland and Marshes

222-5 These areas are the only significant valley oak woodland we have in the area. The marshes in the area are unique and fast disappearing. All the feasible alternatives would harm these. These impacts therefore must be listed as "Unavoidable Significant Impacts" in Chapter 6.

Loss of Local Business

222-6 The EIS/EIR states, "Under the worst-case scenario, Willits would lose the sales taxes of 17 percent of the businesses along US 101. We would also lose businesses and jobs for our people. The loss of business therefore must be listed as "Unavoidable Significant Impacts" in Chapter 6.

Two-Lane Alternatives

222-7 A two-lane bypass, would significantly reduce noise by lowering vehicle speed, it would significantly reduce visual impact, and would save money. The reasons given in chapter 3 for dropping a two-lane alternative from consideration are not clear and don't make sense to either myself or my partner. I and my family, urge you to reconsider a two-lane alternative.

Sincerely, John Weber

John Weber
3450 Ridgewood Road,
Willits, Ca. 95490

222-1 See General Response 1.10 regarding two-lane alternative and General Response 1.11 regarding impact conclusions. The Modified Alternative J1T would not result in a substantial noise increase. See the noise analysis for Modified Alternative J1T in Section 3.11 (FEIS/EIR).

222-2 See response to Comment 30-3 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

222-3 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3). See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

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 regarding center valley interchange.

222-4 Caltrans will evaluate all reasonable means of reducing costs while still meeting project purpose and need during the final design process. See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) regarding project cost and funding.

222-5 Alternative LT does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its overall environmental harm, including impacts to the riparian oak woodland referred to in the comment, and therefore, is not being considered for construction. The preferred alternative (Modified J1T) will avoid the riparian oak woodlands located along the Alternative LT alignment.

While the diverse marsh habitat at the north end of the project is the only one of its type in the immediate project area, it is not a unique habitat type. See Appendix L FEIS/EIR for additional discussion on Masrh impacts associated with Modified Alternative J1T.

222-6 Employment losses may result temporarily because of the decrease in traffic. However, the Economic Impact Report prepared for this project anticipates that the long-term impact on the economy and employment will be beneficial, as a result of a more attractive downtown area and a substantial decrease in through traffic. For instance, the City of Cloverdale, bypassed in the 1990s, has seen growth in its retail sector since the late 1990s. After bypass

construction, the number of retail stores declined from a high in 1993 of 81 to a low in 1996 of 65. In 2001, there were 83 retail stores in Cloverdale. The City of Willits has more than twice as many retail stores as Cloverdale and twice the volume of Cloverdale's taxable transactions. While Willits may experience some downturn in economic activity, it is likely to recover more quickly than Cloverdale, because Willits' economy is larger and more versatile than Cloverdale's.

222-7 See response to Comment 73-5 (Mary Delaney).

223 This number intentionally left blank

224 Carolyn J. Whitcomb

224-1 See General Response 1.10 for discussion of a two lane bypass and why it does not meet the purpose and need of the project.

224-2 Reducing the four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the footprint by half because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. See also response to Comment 73-5 (Mary Delaney). The estimated project costs presented in the DEIS/EIR include cost of mitigation (biology, visual, hazardous waste remediation, etc.). See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for estimated project costs.

See response to Comment 34-11 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning) for a comparison of traffic conditions between a two-lane and a four-lane facility and a discussion of a divided two-lane highway with a concrete median barrier.

See Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) regarding project costs and funding.

Laytonville Gas Company, Inc.
P.O. Box 54
Laytonville, CA 95454

August 13, 2002

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

Dear Ms. Daniels:

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

224-1 The traffic figures given in Table 3-4 do not justify a four-lane freeway bypass. I do not agree with your statement that a two-lane bypass would be "functionally obsolete by the year 2028". The traffic volume in Table 3-4 for 2028 is approximately the same that exists on the two-lane stretch of Highway 101 from the northern Willits City limits to Reynolds Highway. This portion of highway operates without delay and at an acceptable level of service, even during the peak hours.

224-2 I believe that a four-lane freeway bypass is a waste of taxpayer money. None of your alternatives fall within the project budget of $116 million. Why aren't you trying to modify your designs to stay within budget? Do your cost estimates include mitigation costs? A two-lane bypass would be less impacting, therefore requiring less mitigation, would easily handle the projected traffic volumes, and could be built within budget. To increase the safety of a two-lane bypass, you could consider a center barrier, controlled access, and highway overpasses, as is done on many two-lane roadways throughout the country.

224-3 I would hope that when it comes time to start the process on a Laytonville bypass, **only** two-lane alternatives are considered.

Sincerely,

Carolyn J. Whitcomb

Carolyn J. Whitcomb
President

224-3 Because this comment does not pertain to the Willits Bypass project, no response is necessary.

225 Donald Willis

Donald Willis
PO Box 1176
31400 Shimmins Ridge Road
Willits, CA 95490

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

Dear Ms. Daniels:

I have reviewed the Draft EIS/EIR for the Willits Bypass, and I think there are some significant omissions in your document. They are listed below.

Farm and Woodlands Impact

225-1 A very important part of living in Willits for me is the valley itself. Its rural character is an anchoring point for our community. The EIS/EIR says that Alternative L has no significant impacts that cannot be mitigated. Yet it destroys a 30-acre grove of oaks and buries a major part of the Coleman Ranch under fill. The mitigation measures FRM-1 and FRM-3 are not feasible. A two-lane alternative would be able to avoid the oaks at least. As it stands, destruction of valley oaks and farmland must be listed as "Unavoidable Significant Impact" for all alternatives in Chapter 6.

Brooktrails Second Access and Growth Issues

225-2 How is it possible to talk about the alternatives without talking about the possible Brooktrails second access road that is is the planning stages in Mendocino County? Surely the EIS/EIR authors know about that possibility. This omission is the most glaring one, in my opinion, in the EIS/EIR, and makes it an incomplete document. A related question is how any of the alternatives will affect growth in Brooktrails. Of course a Willits bypass will bring about more growth in Brooktrails, and this will have an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" on the already underserved and financially strapped subdivision, and should be listed as such in Chapter 6.

Interchanges

225-3 In order to keep our little town economically viable, I would like to see Caltrans establish conservation easements at the interchanges to protect them from the kind of sprawling growth we have seen in Ukiah and elsewhere. If it cannot do this, then loss of local business due to interchange development must be considered an "Unavoidable Significant Impact" in Chapter 6.

225-1 Alternative LT would impact 10 acres of oak woodland within the Coleman Ranch. Alternative LT does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria and therefore, is not being considered for construction. Modified Alternative J1T, which has been identified as the Preferred Alternative minimizes impacts to the oak riparian woodland referred to in the comment and eliminates fill on the Coleman Ranch. The Modified Alternative J1T places the roadway on the floodway viaduct across the Coleman Ranch. See General Response 1.3. Reducing the four-lane bypass to two lanes would not reduce the footprint substantially because of necessary design components such as shoulders, side slopes, and drainage facilities. See General Response 1.10 for a discussion of why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore was not considered in the DEIS/EIR.

See responses to Comments 34-60 and 34-63 (Willits Citizens for Good Planning) regarding feasibility of mitigation measures to reduce impacts to agricultural land.

225-2 None of the proposed bypass alternatives would prohibit a second access route to the Brooktrails community. See General Response 1.6.

Regarding growth in Brooktrails, the proposed project would make Brooktrails a more attractive location for workers in this area. Based on the Brooktrails Specific Plan, growth to limits specified in the Plan is not expected to have a significant impact on service provision in this community. Also see response to Comment 73-3 (Mary Delaney).

225-3 See General Response 1.12 regarding growth at interchanges.

Noise and Visual Impact

225-4 Part of the beauty of the Willits Valley is its tranquil nature. Even the tourist traffic that comes to enjoy the Skunk Train and, soon, the Roots of Motive Power permanent exhibit at the County Museum, come to enjoy the quiet beauty of the town and its valley. These two qualities, though separate, are interconnected. A freeway once built will be an unavoidable presence, and unfortunately right next to our major tourist attractions. I believe that the noise and visual impact of the freeway will directly add to the loss of income to the town, as those tourists head elsewhere. For economic as well as quality-of-life reasons, I believe that noise and visual impact should both be listed, for all the considered alternatives, under "Unavoidable Significant Impact" in Chapter 6.

Two Lanes Instead of Four

225-5 I know that Caltrans has a built-in institutional bias against building two lanes where it can build four. But I would urge you to reconsider this option. There are a number of advantages. The profile of the bypass would be much reduced, and the noise level also (because of slower speeds). It would be possible to design an alternative that avoided the oak grove, reduced the amount of fill required, and affected the wetlands much less. Most significantly, a two-lane bypass would cost so much less to build that it could actually be done within the budget, unlike any of the four-lane alternatives. The bypass would feed to the north an area of 101 that will never be four-lanes, because of wetland considerations. Much of the traffic approaching from the south is headed for Highway 20 to the coast. If it will funnel down to two-lanes again at the north end of Willits, what is the point of four lanes? Please think about the long-term here—the era of big freeway construction is nearing an end. Your own budgetary constraints tell you that. I believe the EIR/EIS for this project is incomplete because it does not consider a two-lane alternative.

Sincerely,

Donald Willis

Donald Willis

225-4 The preferred alternative (Modified J1T) placed Alternative J1T further to the east behind a visual buffer of dense tall riparian vegetation, in order to minimize impacts to the resources referred to in the comment. As noted in the Visual Impact Assessment report, the bypass provides an opportunity to develop a multi modal transportation plaza, with pedestrians, drivers, bicyclists and train riders. The proximity of the highway to this location may be a convenience to the tourists as well as the locals. The plaza may be designed as a focal point, cultural center, and a place to rest with attractive landscapes. Regarding DEIS/EIR impact analyses, see response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

225-5 See General Response 1.10 which discusses why a two-lane alternative does not meet the purpose and need for the project and therefore was not considered in the DEIS/EIR. Modified Alternative J1T (identified as the Preferred Alternative) has the least impact to wetlands while also avoiding community resources. It also minimizes impacts to the oak riparian woodland referred to in the comment. Keep in mind that the bypass is proposed to meet a need that was identified on U.S. 101 within the project limits (Chapter 2, DEIS/EIR); local traffic does not interfere with interregional traffic on U.S. 101 just north of the project area as it does on U.S. 101/Main Street.

226 Howard Wilson

226-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C ("ELSIE") does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

7-25-02

Cher Daniels

226-1 I feel the Elsie Wild Cat Canyon is the best way to go, for Willits, Bypass.

Sincerely

Howard Wilson

Mr & Mrs Howard C Wilson
26540 Daphne Way
Willits, CA 95490-8901

227 Joanne Wimberly

227-1 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection and on the Miracle Mile south of the S.R. 20/Main Street intersection. See response to Comment 139-7 (Karina McAbee). Section 3.6.1 (DEIS/EIR) discusses the TSM alternative, a non-freeway alternative paralleling U.S. 101/Main Street through Willits that was studied due to public interest. Due primarily to high cost and severe environmental impacts and because the alternative did not meet the purpose and need of the project, Alternative TSM was dropped from consideration.

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.

Name: Joanne Wimberly
Address: 6501 Sherwood Rd. Willits, CA. 95490
Phone: no phone

Date: Aug 1, 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:

227-1 As a long time property owner on Sherwood Rd. in Willits, CA, I know the two traffic problems in my town: ① the Highway 101 & Highway 20 turnoff ② the Sherwood Rd. turnoff from Highway 101. Your proposed, most costly freeway goes around the problems. It does not address or solve the problems at all. This is ludicrous! I am not paying tax dollars for zip solutions. We need a simple 2 lane expressway going north to south in our town in addition to Highway 101. The EIR compiled is chock full of inadequacies and instituted "future plans" for mitigations for a number of

227-2 serious problems ④ noise in the Valley ⑤ gas fumes from cars stagnating in the Valley creating smog ⑥ destroying the wetlands and habitat (planting acorns will never make new forests!!!) ⑦ the loss of business in our small town due to lack of cars travelling through business district. Caltrans has presented a totally unthinking and uncaring "document." Throw it out and start getting what is needed done in our town and doesn't destroy the good aspects (like visual beauty) we already possess.

Sincerely,

Joanne Wimberly

227-2 See response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

228 Jeanne Wolfe

The following individuals submitted copies of the same form letter:

Barden, Fred
Belt, Robert
Belt, Virginia
Belt, Bonita and Steven Drake
Borras, Tania
Braden, Fred
Cunningham, Alice and Jack
Fenton, Patricia, Jack and Willy
Roddick, Gertel
Wolfe, Jeanne
Yee, Brenda

228-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

The Quail Meadows Interchange, which is north of the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection (see Environmental Atlas, Map 6), would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. General Response 1.6.

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

228-2 See General Response 1.4 regarding a Willits Creek restoration.

Glen Daniels Chief
Caltrans Office of Environmental Mgmt
2389 Gateway Oaks Dr
Sacto CA 95833
Attn - Nancy McKenzie

228-1 We live in Brooktrails. We support ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon proposal. This uses the combined alternatives L1 in the south and C1T in the north, known as ELSIE. It would connect with a new county road to Brooktrails in Wild Oat Canyon. This combination is most direct, affordable and offers best service to the community as a whole, including inter-regional traffic.

We currently have only one way to Willits by way of Sherwood Road. This road is congested and dangerous where it meets Highway 101.

Our county has decided to build a second access road from Brooktrails for daily convenience and emergency service. It will probably connect to Highway 101 at Wild Oat Canyon.

If Caltrans builds the Truck Scales Interchange, this new road will work perfectly for us and for any trucks that may need to go to Brooktrails or out Sherwood Road. This is a real safety issue.

But if you decide to build the Quail Meadows Interchange, we are sure traffic will worsen significantly at the intersection of Sherwood Road and Highway 101. This is because it would be much shorter to get to the freeway using Sherwood Road than by way of Wild Oat Canyon. There would be increased danger to commuters and school children because of the nearby high school. Also, a southbound delivery truck or moving van and even some cars cannot turn onto Sherwood Road from Highway 101 because of the sharp angle. We do not see any discussion of Caltrans assisting us to mitigate the serious internal conflicts that would be created by the construction of the Quail Meadows Interchange.

228-2 We understand that the Truck Scales Interchange and Alternate C1T have negative environmental impacts. But we do not see any mention in the draft EIR of the Willits Creek Restoration proposal, which would solve the fish and wetlands impact problems.

If you use the mitigation measure known as the Willits Creek Restoration, C1T and the Truck Scales Interchange will be the preferred alternative, especially when you consider its positive features in contrast to the many problems with the Quail Meadows Interchange.

Sincerely
Jeanne Wolfe

229 Charles and Darlene Woodbury

229-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

08/07/02 12:31 PM

I am a resident of Willits and have been waiting since I've been here for THE WILLITS BYPASS!!! I live in Brooktrails and have to travel to Santa Rosa to visit my doctor. Getting through Willlits is the largest obstacle to a calm and productive trip.

229-1 My wife and I see no reason to cross the railroad several times with one of your alternatives, when the Elsie and Oat Canyon routes avoid that. The Willits Creek Restoration Project corrects the realignment of long ago and works into our favored plan. We feel your alternative offers no relief to the residents of Brooktrails.

Please consider getting construction started as soon as possible with the L C combination and Wild Oat Canyon Brooktrails' badly needed second access-egress. Most urgently and sincerely,

Charles and Darlene Woodbury
27280 Bear Terrace
Willits (Brooktrails), Ca., 95490-8956
(707) 459-6506

The Quail Meadows Interchange, which is north of the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection (see Environmental Atlas, Map 6), would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. See General Response 1.6.

230 Glenn and Roberta Yokum

230-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. It will terminate north of Sherwood Road at Quail Meadows. See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road. The valley alternatives originally ended north of Reynolds Highway (Alternatives C1, J1, and L), but these alternatives were shortened to meet budget constraints; Alternatives C1T, J1T, and LT would terminate at Quail Meadows Interchange. There was no practical way to truncate Alternative E3, so the termination of that alternative remained north of Reynolds Highway.

230-2 Comment noted. Caltrans' traffic studies substantiate the need for a bypass of Willits. Please see Section 1.2 (FEIS/EIR) for estimated project construction schedule.

501

Willits, Ca.
Aug 21, 2002

To Whom it may concern;

Thank you for the opportunity to express our feeling on the Willits Bypass - We would like to see

230-1 it go as planned from the Schmidbauer property to Reynolds Hwy - Brooktrails can build their own roads when they can afford it.

230-2 We need a Bypass now —

Thank you,

Glenn & Roberta Yokum
2251 E. Hill Rd.
Willits —

231 Marvin and Diana Zielinski

231-1 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection. See General Response 1.8.

See General Response 1.6 regarding Brooktrails Township second access road.

Marvin and Diana Zielinski
889 S. Main Street #172
Willits, CA 95490

July 30, 2002

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

ATTN: Nancy MacKenzie
Environmental Coordinator

RE: Willits Bypass

Dear Ms. Daniels:

This letter is to inform you of our concerns with the recent information released regarding the Willits Bypass proposal.

231-1 **Most aspects of the Bypass seem reasonable except for the northern interchange to be located at Quail Meadows. My wife and I view with dismay the seeming indifference to the disruptive traffic nightmare the Quail Meadow location would cause BrookTrails residents such as us. Though I am no longer employed, we make frequent trips south to Ukiah, Santa Rosa and San Francisco for medical appointments, business, shopping and recreation. We have reason to know that the Sherwood Road and Main Street (Hiway 101) intersection is already congested with most drivers turning south on Main Street. It is unthinkable to contemplate the back-up the steep hillside of Sherwood Road would be like with most drivers trying to make a left turn to go north towards the planned interchange at Quail Meadows. Locating the interchange a little further north at the old truck scales is a better solution. Additionally, as a 100% service-connected disabled veteran who is wheelchair dependent, I and my wife have always worried about access to an escape route in the event of an emergency such as a forest fire with only one way out on Sherwood Road. Locating the interchange at the truck scales and extending Sherwood Road down to it appears to solve several problems at once - a good traffic pattern, providing a safe, much needed thoroughfare and contributing to community development.**

We hope our letter will add conviction to the community support our town has for this amendment to the Willits Bypass Plan. Please do not hesitate to contact us at (707) 459-4466 if you should need any other comments or assistance. Thank you for your consideration in this most important matter.

Sincerely,

Marvin & Diana Zielinski

232 Paul Zimmerman

232-1 Modified Alternative J1T has been identified as the Preferred Alternative. Alternative L/C does not meet Clean Water Act Section 404(b)(1) criteria for its significant adverse impacts to wetlands and its potentially significant adverse impacts to federally listed fish species (General Response 1.3).

The Quail Meadows Interchange, which is north of the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection (see Environmental Atlas, Map 6), would accommodate a connection to a Brooktrails Township second access road. General Response 1.6.

232-2 Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits, including at the Sherwood Road/Main Street intersection. See General Response 1.8.

232-3 See General Response 1.4 regarding Willits Creek restoration.

Paul A. Zimmerman
402 N. Abbott Avenue
Milpitas, California 95035
31 July 2002

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

Subject: Caltrans & Willets Bypass

232-1 We have property in and visit Broooktrails. We support the ELSIE/Wild Oat Canyon proposal. This uses the combined alternatives L1 in the south and CIT in the north, known as ELSIE. It would connect with a new county road to Brooktrails in Wild Oat Canyon. This combination is most direct, affordable and offers best service to the community as a whole, including inter-regional traffic.

Currently, there is only one way to Willits by way of Sherwood Road. This road is congested and dangerous where it meets Highway 101. Southbound traffic on 101 makes it difficult to enter.

The county has decided to build a second access road from Brooktrails for daily convenience and emergency service. It will probably connect to Highway 101 at Wild Oak Road.
If Caltrans builds the Truck Scales Interchange, this new road will work perfectly for the residents and for any trucks that may need to go to Brooktrails or out Sherwood Road. This is a real safety issue.

232-2 But if you decide to build the Quail Meadows Interchange, we are sure traffic will worsen significantly at the intersection of Sherwood Road and Highway101. This is because it would be much shorter to get to the freeway using Sherwood Road than by way of Wild Oat Canyon. There would be increased danger to commuters and school children because of the nearby high school. Also, a southbound delivery truck of moving van and even some cars cannot turn into Sherwood Road from Highway 101 because of the sharp angle. We do not see any discussion of Caltrans assisting us to mitigate the serious internal conflicts that would be created by the construction of the Quail Meadows Interchange

232-3 We understand that the Truck Scales Interchange and Alternate C1T have negative environmental impacts. But we do not see any mention of the draft EIR of the Willits Creek Restoration proposal, which would solve the fish and wetlands impact problems.

If you use the mitigation measure known as the Willits Creek Restoration, C1T and the Truck Scales Interchange will be the preferred alternative, especially when you consider its positive features in contrast to the many problems with the Quail Meadows Interchange.

Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Zimmerman
Mr. & Mrs. Paul A. Zimmerman

233 Melinda Zubak

The following individuals submitted the same or similar form letter.

Bell, Sulin
Berrett, Roger
Boland, Theresa
Bui, Viet
Colleton, Douglas
Coltrane, Mia
Coltrane-Briscoe, Serena
Copperfield, Kevin
Copperfield, Spencer
Copperfield, Wendy
Costa, Larry
Costa, Peggy
Crawley, Matt
Darlington, David
De La Cruz, Tatiana
Delaney, Mary
DeSmidt, Gabe
Elliott, Amy and Neil
Falkenberg, Shelley
Gibson, Lauren
Girdanskas, Tom
Gnatowski, Tad
Gotsch, Greg
Green, Jonas
Grossman, Ellen
Hendrickson, Eliz
Hernandez, Roselio
Holden, Karen
Horrocks, Nancy
Johnson, Cailean
Keyes, Judy
Kuhnert, Renate
Lacelle, Marie
Lightrain, Michael
Linney, Warren and Joan
Maglinte, Ann
Marill, Jim
Mason, Ryan
Misseldine, Mary
Mondo, Melissa
Moore, Pat
Nelson, Andrew
Norris, Maria
Open Circle, Employees (7)
Ostrander, Verne
Palmer, Sarah
Pennington, Ryan
Peterson, Robert
Phillips, John
Rhode, Matthew
Richmond, Margo
Robinson, David
Saijo, Rane
Sanborn, Patricia
Schuyler, Susan
Schwartz, Dawnna
Sison, Anita
Slocum, Ree
Stark, Matthew
Stephens, Jan
Verwey, Sullivan
Winkler, Scott
Zellachild, Mary
Zubak, Melinda

Name: Melinda Zubak
Address: PO B 1687 Willits
City, State, Zip Code: Willits, Ca. 95490
Phone: no phone

Date: July 17, 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:

I have reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report for the Willits Bypass and I have the following comments:

233-1 • The EIS/EIR fails to properly identify numerous unavoidable significant impacts a 4-lane bypass will have on Willits, Little Lake Valley, and the surrounding communities. These impacts include noise, loss of farmland, loss of oak woodlands, loss of wetlands, visual impacts, and impacts on local business. All of these impacts will substantially degrade the character of the area and our quality of life.

233-2 • The EIS/EIR does not include a two-lane alternative as a way to mitigate many of these unavoidable significant impacts.

233-3 • The EIS/EIR does not analyze a tie-in to the Brooktrails Second Access Road.

233-4 • The EIS/EIR does not offer the purchase of conservation easements at the interchanges as a mitigation to prevent commercial sprawl.

233-5 I am requesting that all of the above impacts and issues be addressed in the Final EIS/EIR.

Sincerely,

Melinda Zubak

233-1 See response to Comment 30-1 (Mendocino Forest Watch).

233-2 A two-lane bypass will not be considered because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project. This was discussed in the DEIS/EIR (Section 3.6.2) and an expanded discussion is included in General Response 1.10.

233-3 Any of the proposed build alternatives would accommodate a Brooktrails Township second access road (General Response 1.6).

233-4 See General Response 1.12 regarding “growth at interchanges.”

233-5 See responses to Comments 233-1 through 233-4.

234 No name provided

234-1 Modified Alternative J1T, the Preferred Alternative, stays closer to the developed areas of Willits than the other proposed build alternatives. See response to Comment 227-1 (Jeanne Wimberly) which discusses the TSM Alternative, which would have paralleled Main Street, in Willits, and reasons it was eliminated from consideration.

234-2 A two-lane bypass will not be considered because it does not meet the purpose and need for the project. This was discussed in the DEIS/EIR (Section 3.6.2) and an expanded discussion is included in General Response 1.10.

Any of the bypass alternatives will reduce traffic in Willits. See also response to Comment 227-1 (Jeanne Wimberly) regarding City of Willits' proposed solutions to local traffic congestion.

Alleviating local traffic congestion is a benefit, but not the goal, of the bypass project whose purpose is to reduce congestion, increase safety, and achieve a level of service of at least "C" for interregional traffic on U.S. 101.

STAY CLOSE TO THE EXISTING N. South Corridors (the existing

234-1 Hwy 101 - Main St. in Willits - Don't fan out all over the Valley on the East side.

Preferable to have a

234-2 2 lane by pass ~~with~~ along with the developement of another slower in town Blvd. to handle local traffic. Most congestion is caused by local traffic. This could be elliviated by connecting existing streets paralel with main st.