



# NEWS RELEASE

12-016

**Today's Date:** Friday, February 17, 2012  
**District:** 1 - Eureka  
**Contact:** Phil Frisbie, Jr.  
**Phone:** (707) 441-4678

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### CALTRANS SIGNS FINAL PERMIT FOR WILLITS BYPASS

**EUREKA** – This afternoon, after a careful review by Caltrans staff, District 1 Director Charlie Fielder signed the final environmental permit for the Willits bypass. The U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) provided the permit to Caltrans for review late yesterday, and it will now be returned to USACE for their final signature.

This \$200 million project will relieve congestion, reduce delays, and improve safety for traffic passing through Willits, eliminating the only stop lights on US 101 between San Francisco and Eureka. Caltrans will be going before the California Transportation Commission on March 28-29 to ask for the funding needed for construction.

"We are very pleased to be moving forward with this important project", said Charlie Fielder. "Not only will we be constructing a bypass to help alleviate traffic congestion and delay on Route 101 through Willits, this project is also providing the opportunity for significant environmental restoration in the Little Lake Valley. I want to thank our permitting and resource agencies, local agencies, and our legislative representatives who supported this project. But most of all, I want to thank all the citizens and groups who provided their comments and support. This project is better because of them."

Besides the USACE, the permitting and resource agencies included the National Marine Fisheries Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. Local agencies included the City of Willits and Mayor Bruce Burton, Mendocino County Council of Governments and Executive Director Phil Dow, and Mendocino County Supervisor John Pinches. Legislative representatives included U.S. Congressman Mike Thompson and U.S. Senator Barbara Boxer. Local groups included the Mendocino County Farm Bureau, Mendocino County Resource Conservation District, and the Willits Environmental Center, which provided valuable feedback and were strong advocates for local sustainable agriculture.

###

**SLOW FOR THE  
CONE ZONE**  
CALTRANS