



# NEWS RELEASE

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### WEST COUNTY CONNECTOR PROJECT COMPLETE, SMOOTHER SAILING IN CARPOOL LANES ON I-405, SR-22 AND I-605

IRVINE – After four years in the making, Caltrans and the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) today marked the completion of the \$297 million West County Connector project, which will bring congestion relief where three major freeways (Interstate 405, Interstate 605 and State Route 22) converge.

“The completion of this project is wonderful news for hundreds of thousands of commuters who travel this connector every day,” said Caltrans Director Malcolm Dougherty. “It increases safety by reducing the merging and weaving previously necessary to transition between carpool lanes and reduces traffic congestion, getting motorists to their destinations sooner.”

The six mile project constructed two new direct carpool connectors eliminating the need to exit and re-enter the carpool lanes when transitioning to adjacent freeways; added a second carpool lane in each direction on the San Diego Freeway (I-405) between the Garden Grove Freeway (SR-22) and San Gabriel Freeway (I-605); and reconstructed six bridges to add an additional carpool lane. In addition, the installation of new sound walls, retaining walls and landscaping help reduce noise and enhance the aesthetic qualities of the commute through the cities and communities of Garden Grove, Westminster, Seal Beach, Los Alamitos, Long Beach and Rossmore.

“It took incredible coordination between OCTA, Caltrans, contractors, cities and residents to manage such a large project on three active freeways traveled by so many vehicles every day,” said OCTA Chairman Jeff Lalloway, also Mayor Pro Tem of Irvine. “We appreciate the patience of residents and businesses during the construction and we hope that everybody is as pleased with the results as we are.”

This major connection between Orange and Los Angeles Counties is the busiest section of freeway in the nation, with an average daily traffic volume as high as 370,000 vehicles and projections of 430,000 in 2035. This connector is also an important truck route and an integral part of Southern California’s freeway network. Motorists traverse this section of highway for access to John Wayne Airport, Long Beach Municipal Airport, Los Angeles International Airport and the Port of Long Beach.

The \$297 million project was primarily funded with \$135.4 million from Proposition 1B, a 2006 voter-approved bond, \$49.6 million from federal Recovery Act funds and \$91.8 million from the federal Congestion Mitigation & Air Quality program. An additional \$15 million was provided by Measure M, Orange County’s half-cent sales tax for transportation improvements, and \$5.2





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million from the city of Seal Beach. To date, more than \$18 billion in Proposition 1B funds have been put to work statewide for transportation purposes.

The High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) or carpool lane system is used as a cost-effective strategy by agencies like Caltrans to maximize the people-carrying capacity on freeways. They incentivize new travel and mobility options such as carpooling or riding transit and play a significant role in the management of congestion on state freeways. Additional benefits include travel time savings and trip reliability for lane users, increased current and future mobility for transportation corridors and reduced air emissions due to decreased congestion.

Improvement to the I-405, SR-22, I-605 connector is among 35 Caltrans projects underway in Orange County totaling \$535 million.

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