

SR 299

Transportation Concept Report

General Route Information

Introduction

This section provides general route information regarding State Route (SR) 299 such as route description, route history, regional setting, population, county population and economic forecasts, traffic collision data, goods movement, transportation options, right of way and route inventory.



Route Description

Describing this route from west to east, the route passes through a diverse range of climates and topography. Near the Pacific Ocean, the elevation is close to sea level, the route then crosses over the coastal mountain range, winds along the Trinity River, cuts across the north end of the Sacramento Valley, and traverses through forests to a high elevation desert at the Nevada State line. The route has eight mountain passes: Lord Ellis Summit (elevation 2,260 ft), Berry Summit (elev. 2,871 ft), Oregon Mountain (elev. 2,888 ft), Buckhorn Summit (elev. 3,215 ft.), Hatchet Mountain Summit (elev. 4,368 ft.), Big Valley Mountain Summit (elev. 4,603 ft), Adin Pass (elev. 5,173 ft), and Cedar Pass (elev. 6,305 ft). These passes and the higher elevations along the route are prone to winter driving conditions including snow and ice. **Table 1** provides the county Post Mile limits. **Table 2** provides the length of the route and lane miles.

The California State Highway System consists of routes described in the California Streets and Highways Code. Chapter 2, Article 3. (Section 599) describes SR 299 as follows:

Route 299 is from:

- (a) Route 101 near Arcata to Route 395 at Alturas.
- (b) Route 395 near Alturas to the Nevada state line via Cedarville.

The California Streets and Highways Code (section 253.8) identifies that Route 299 from Route 101 near Arcata to Route 395 at Alturas shall be included in the California Freeway and Expressway System. SR 299 is part of the interregional route system between US Route 101 and SR 89, and between SR 139 and US 395.

Table 1 County Post Mile limits for SR 299	
County	Post Miles
Humboldt	0.0/43.04
Trinity	0.0/72.25
Shasta	0.0/99.36
Lassen	0.0/25.63
Modoc	0.0/66.63

Source: California Department of Transportation, Transportation System Information Program

Table 2 Length and Lane Miles for SR 299		
COUNTY	LENGTH MILES	LANE MILES
HUM	42.06	117.1
TRI	72.13	152.6
SHA	99.32	218.4
LAS	25.64	51.3
MOD	66.64	133.3
District 1 Total	42.06	117.1
District 2 Total	263.72	555.6
ROUTE TOTAL	305.8	672.7

Route Facility Type and Function

Most of the 299 route is a two-lane conventional highway/two-lane expressway with intermittent passing lanes. In many of the small communities where it serves as the “main street” it is a two-lane conventional highway with a continuous center turn lane and/or channelized turn lanes (including Willow Creek, Weaverville, Burney, Fall River Mills, Nubieber, and Bieber). The exceptions are in the cities of Arcata (four-lane freeway), and Redding (four-lane conventional/four-lane freeway).

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McArthur in Shasta County

SR 299 is an east-west transportation facility designated as a high emphasis interregional route and focus route between the Pacific coast of northern California and I-5 in Redding and an interregional route between I-5 and Alturas. The route provides interregional movement of people, goods, and recreational travel linking rural communities and small urban areas across northern California. In addition, SR 299 links trucking to three major north-south routes in northern California – US 101, Interstate 5, and US 395. The western portion of the route also provides access to the Port of Eureka, which is the only deep-water port in California north of San Francisco. Recreational attractions include: the Pacific Ocean, the Trinity River (designated Wild and Scenic), Trinity Alps Wilderness Area, Trinity Lake, Whiskeytown National Recreation Area, Weaverville and Old Shasta (both on the National Register of Historic Places), the Burney Falls area, the Ash Creek Wildlife area near Bieber, the Modoc National Forest, and the Modoc Wildlife Refuge.

Regional Settings

SR 299 passes through Humboldt County in Caltrans District 1; and the following four counties in District 2, Trinity, Shasta, Lassen, and Modoc. See **Appendix A** for county information. The route passes through four incorporated cities (Arcata, Blue Lake, Redding, and Alturas) and numerous small communities. Just east of Cedarville, at the Nevada State line, the pavement ends and the route continues as a graveled roadway into the State of Nevada towards the city of Winnemucca.

SR 299 West of Redding

The portion of the route west of Redding begins at US 101 in the City of Arcata as a 4-lane freeway and transitions into sections of 2-lane conventional highway and expressway with intermittent passing lanes until it reaches the western city limits of Redding. Near the coast, the terrain is mostly flat and rolling with grasslands, coastal scrub and evergreen forests. The route then passes over the coastal range at Lord Ellis and Berry summits, traverses eastward along the Trinity River, climbs over Oregon Mountain, through the community of Weaverville, over Buckhorn Summit, and along Whiskeytown Lake to Redding.

This portion of the route, is a designated National Forest Scenic Byway, provides access to a vast region of over 5000 square miles and links the northern Sacramento Valley to the deepwater port in Eureka. The majority of this portion of SR 299 has generally acceptable operations, with the two exceptions being Weaverville (particularly during the summer months) and Buckhorn grade (a notoriously narrow, steep and curvilinear section of highway that does not accommodate STAA trucks).

SR 299 Redding

The portion of SR 299 passing through the Redding urban area has the highest volumes on the route and experiences some congestion during peak volume periods. The section of the route on the west side of Redding (SR 299) is a four-lane conventional facility with numerous driveways and signalized intersections. The areas largest high school and several other schools are located adjacent to this section of SR 299. Together the schools generate substantial traffic, causing congestion and queuing at intersections on weekdays during both morning and early afternoon periods. SR 299 shares designations with SR 273 on Market Street for 1.9 miles. The facility is a four lane freeway for 3 miles east of the I-5 separation.

SR 299 East of Redding

SR 299 east of Redding is mostly 2 lane conventional highway, with intermittent truck climbing and passing lanes. As SR 299 extends away from the Sacramento Valley and Redding, the roadway grades transition between rolling and mountainous as the route passes through oak woodlands and into conifer forests. The facility has four steep grade areas near Hatchet summit in Shasta County. Near Burney the terrain transitions into rolling low hills and flattens eastward through Fall River valley and the communities of Fall River Mills and McArthur. Elevations increase toward Big Valley Mountain Summit in Lassen County, after which SR 299 descends eastward, into Big Valley and over several forks of the Pit River overflow through the communities of Bieber and Nubieber in the north west corner of Lassen County.

As SR 299 enters Modoc County the terrain has rolling undulations near Adin and rises to higher elevations through the Modoc National Forest and Adin Pass. The route then descends into rolling valley terrain near the community of Canby and progresses eastward to the City of Alturas, which is the county seat. There is a route break in Alturas at the Junction of SR 299 and US 395. Eastbound vehicles use US 395 for almost 6 miles before SR 299 resumes along rolling terrain until it climbs into the forested Cedar Pass and then descends into the high dessert flatlands in the Surprise Valley region and ends at the Nevada State Line.