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April 9-10, 2008 CTC HEARING

TO: California Transportation Commission

RE: Hwy 156 Improvement Project in San Benito County Between Hollister & San Juan Bta.

It is very difficult for rural counties to provide or dedicate local sources of funding to highway projects. San Benito County has been a self-help county providing a total of \$58,000,000 to the California highway system during the past 20 years. More local revenues are being dedicated for future highway improvements as we speak.

Regarding the Hwy 156 Improvement Project between Hollister and San Juan Bta., we have been able to acquire local funding of \$9,600,000 and \$28,000,000 of STIP Funding. We need the balance of \$9,600,000 from the Trade Corridor Improvement Funds to fully fund this project and ensure it makes the 2008 STIP. This project is not only important to the 156 traffic corridor as the most direct route for the movement of goods and tourists between the San Joaquin Valley and Salinas/Monterey Bay areas, but also serves a role in the Hwy 152 Corridor as well. The Flyover at the Hwy 156/152 intersection allows for the free flow of traffic into San Benito County, so our county will absorb some of that corridor's tourist and truck traffic as well.

I realize the CTC is short of funding to meet the needs of all the projects that may qualify for the 2008 STIP. Should a current project on the STIP slip that qualifies for Trade Corridor Improvement Funding, I respectfully request the CTC consider the 156 Improvement Project as an alternative project. If we lose our current momentum, it is possible that we will not only lose our \$28,000,000 of STIP Funding, but possibly lose our local match of \$9,600,000 for the Trade Corridor Improvement Funding. Having to wait and go through all of this again in 2010 could jeopardize the project, especially from a funding standpoint. Could the Commission please clarify the status of the \$28,000,000 STIP allocation for this project, should the allocation of \$9,600,000 of Trade Corridor Improvement Funding not occur?

I would like the Commission to consider that the San Benito County area involves 3 different highway corridors, the Hwy 152, Hwy 25 and Hwy 156 corridors. While there is not enough funding to complete improvements to all three corridors at once, establishing all the funding sources for this project in the 2008 STIP would ensure that at least one of the corridors (Hwy 156) will get relief within the next 5 years. Again, this project would provide relief for 2 corridors and allow our county to concentrate on helping neighboring Santa Clara County achieve their needed improvements to the Hwy 152 corridor.

Thank you for your time and clarifying my concerns.

Respectfully,



Stephen J. Rosati

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Former Co-Chair Hollister 156 Bypass Committee
Former Chair Measure A Committee