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September 8, 2009

Bob Alvarado, Chair  
 California Transportation Commission  
 1120 "N" St.  
 Room 2221 (MS-52)  
 Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Alvarado,

The Transportation Authority of Marin, the Sonoma County Transportation Authority, and Caltrans have made significant progress since the assignment of CMIA funds to the Marin-Sonoma Narrows Corridor in early 2007. Final environmental approvals are either complete or will be complete in the next several weeks. The project has successfully been defined and fully funded in the Regional Transportation Plan, adopted this past April 2009 by MTC for the nine-county Bay Area. There has been significant progress in designing the early funded segments of the corridor, which are primarily safety-related improvements.

The Marin-Sonoma Narrows remains a critical connector from the growing business environment of Sonoma County and areas north to the supply and transport centers of inner San Francisco Bay. For our business community to withstand these recessionary times and grow into the future, our single highway link must be kept open and functioning well. The closures of the MSN section of Highway 101 due to flooding or cross-traffic accidents cause business losses that can be difficult to recover from, especially in these recessionary times.

The effort to capture federal, state, and local funds over the last several years has successfully allowed safety elements of the corridor to go forward. These elements were prioritized by a combined policy committee of elected officials from Marin and Sonoma County, in partnership with Caltrans. These safety elements consist of closing the over 50 access openings directly onto Highway 101 and raising the highway out of the flood zone surrounding San Antonio Creek. The access openings, primarily private driveways, will be replaced by interchanges and frontage roads. The flooded area will be addressed by a re-alignment of the freeway. These features get the first funding available for the corridor, and we are pleased to say, are fully funded and moving towards construction.

While waiting for the environmental document to be completed, the local agencies responsible for the design phase of the project have been able up to this point to continue design work. This would allow the project to be constructed on schedule, despite a substantial delay in finalizing the environmental document. Now, the Transportation

Authority of Marin, designing both the Redwood Landfill Interchange and frontage roads along with the San Antonio Creek flood realignment, is relying on state funds dedicated to these projects to be able to continue to design and deliver the safety improvements.

In granting Prop 1B CMIA funding in March of 2007, the CTC allowed the local agencies along with Caltrans to define exactly how the funds would be spent. The locals worked to fully fund the safety improvements, dedicating all of their local RIP/STIP funds, also made possible by Prop 1B. Caltrans prioritized ITIP funds from the STIP as well. The CMIA and STIP funds, in concert with federal and local funds, have allowed the local safety priorities for the corridor to be fully funded.

We understand that on its September agenda, the CTC has consideration of an allocation of both TCRP funds as well as complimentary STIP funds dedicated to these safety elements of the corridor. We also understand that state funds are very scarce, which may not allow an immediate allocation of the STIP funds. NBLC strongly encourages that the CTC act in whatever way is possible to provide the funds that will allow the design work to continue on these very important safety improvements. Otherwise, progress on the safety related improvements will come to a very unfortunate and cost-increasing halt.

It's hard to imagine a major California freeway closing when the neighboring creek exceeds its banks. It is also hard to imagine over 50 driveways opening onto a high speed freeway corridor. We have all contributed much to making sure these problems are addressed as soon as possible.

Please take whatever steps are necessary to allow the work on these projects to continue. Thank you for your consideration of this matter.

Sincerely,



Cynthia Murray  
President and CEO

Cc: Supervisor Steve Kinsey, Chair, TAM  
Supervisor Mike Kerns, Chair, SCTA  
Bijan Sartipi, Director, Caltrans District 4