State of California
DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

M e m o r a n d u m

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: June 11, 2013

Reference No.: 2.2c.(1)
Action Item

From: NORMA ORTEGA
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared By: Katrina Pierce
Division Chief
Environmental Analysis

Subject: **APPROVAL OF PROJECT FOR FUTURE CONSIDERATION OF FUNDING**

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission), as a responsible agency, approve the attached Resolution E-13-46.

ISSUE:

01-DN-197, VARIOUS, 01-DN-199, VARIOUS
RESOLUTION E-13-46

The attached resolution proposes to approve for future consideration of funding the following project for which a Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) has been completed:

- State Route 197 (SR-197) and United States Route 199 (US-199) in Del Norte County. Roadway improvements at various locations on SR-197 and US-199 near the town of Patrick Creek. (PPNO 1047 and PPNO 1073)

This project in Del Norte County will improve spot locations on SR-197 and US-199 in Del Norte County so that two Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) trucks passing in opposite directions can be accommodated. The proposed work consists of roadway widening, shoulder widening, roadway curve improvements, a bridge replacement and culvert replacements. The project will bring SR-197 and US-199 into compliance with federal and state legislation regarding access for STAA trucks.

The overall 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project consists of four smaller projects as follows:

Ruby 1 (EA 48110) is fully funded in the State Highway Operation and Protection Program Minor A Program. The total estimated cost is $1,773,000. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2013-14.

Ruby 2 (EA 45490) is proposed for the Fiscal Year 2014-15 State Highway Operation and Protection Program Minor Program. The total estimated cost is $3,028,000. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2014-15.

Patrick Creek Narrows (PPNO 1047) will improve US-199 from Post Mile 20.5 to Post Mile 25.5. The project is programmed in the 2012 State Transportation Improvement Program. The total estimated cost for capital and support is $21,302,000.

The Narrows and Washington Curve (PPNO 1073) will improve US-199 from Post Mile 22.7 to Post Mile 26.5. The project is programmed in the 2012 State Highway Operation and Protection Program. The total estimated cost for capital and support is $6,750,000. Construction is estimated to begin in Fiscal Year 2013-14.

The scope, as described for the preferred alternative, is consistent with the project scope programmed in the 2012 State Highway Operation and Protection Program and 2012 State Transportation Improvement Program.

A copy of the FEIR has been provided to Commission staff, a copy of the Executive Summary is attached. Resources that may be impacted by the project include community impacts, aesthetics and visual, cultural, water quality and stormwater runoff, hydrology and floodplains, geology and soils, noise, and biological resources. Potential impacts associated with the project can all be mitigated to below significance through proposed mitigation measures. As a result, a Final Environmental Impact Report was prepared for the project.

Attachments

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding
02-DN-197, VAR, 02-DN-199, VAR
Resolution E-13-46

1.1 **WHEREAS,** the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed an Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:

- State Route 197 (SR-197) and United States Route 199 (US-199) in Del Norte County. Roadway improvements at various locations on SR-197 and US-199 near the town of Patrick Creek. (PPNO 1047 and PPNO 1073)

1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and

1.3 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

1.4 **WHEREAS,** Findings were made by the Department pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines; and

1.5 **WHEREAS,** the Department found that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby support approval of the above referenced project to allow for consideration of funding.

June 6, 2013

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR

197/199 SAFE STAA ACCESS PROJECT

SR 197 AND US 199 IN DEL NORTE COUNTY

RUBY 1, 01-DN-197-PM 4.5; RUBY 2, 01-DN-197-PM 3.2-4.0;

PATRICK CREEK NARROWS, 01-DN-199-PM 20.5-20.9, PM 23.92-24.08, & PM 25.55-25.65;

THE NARROWS, 01-DN-199-PM 22.7-23.0; WASHINGTON CURVE, 01-DN-199-PM 26.3-26.5

EA: 01-48110, 01-45490, 01-45000, 01-47940, 01-44830

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Animal Species and Threatened and Endangered Species

Salmonids – Fish

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential for significant effects under CEQA to the following fish species:

- Coho Salmon – Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast ESU (Federal Threatened, California Threatened, Essential Fish Habitat)
- Chinook Salmon – Southern Oregon/Northern California Coastal (Essential Fish Habitat)
- Coastal Cutthroat Trout (California Species of Concern, Forest Service Species of Concern)

The Draft EIR listed potential adverse impacts to fish species due to the potential for in-stream work to kill individual fish at the Patrick Creek Location 2, during bridge construction. The DEIR included measures to avoid and minimize impacts to less than significant levels. Changes and alterations in the project design and

construction have been incorporated into the project which avoid the significant environmental effect, as described in the Final EIR. The project design was modified to construct the bridge without work in the active channel, as well as providing other minimization and avoidance measures.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Department will avoid and minimize potential impacts on the salmonids and their Critical Habitat and EFH to the greatest extent practicable during project construction. Specific work windows and limitations on construction will be determined through consultations with resource agencies. To avoid, minimize, and offset impacts, the following measures will be included by the Department:

- Large woody debris obtained from tree removal in the project area will be made available to resource agencies for placement in nearby streams and rivers. This will have a positive effect on fish rearing habitat.
- All trees not taken by resource agencies or used by other government or private entities, with approval from the Department, will be put through a chipper and the chips will be applied to areas of exposed soil on-site as erosion control mulch.
- Sediment and erosion control measures will be implemented to minimize sediment discharge to the river or other waters.
- A vacuum sweeper will be used to clean the pavement.
- No material will be placed where it may enter the river due to precipitation.
- Noise blankets are being considered to help reduce the noise from blasting at the Narrows.
- If feasible during blasting activities at the Narrows, K-rail will be placed near the centerline, and a cyclone fence will be placed on top of that.
- No impact pile driving will be used for bridge work or retaining walls.
- There will be no instream activity in the Middle Fork Smith River.
- Debris resulting from bridgework at Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2 will be contained to the maximum extent practicable.

The Draft and Final EIR included compensatory mitigation for impacts to Coho Salmon (see below) for adverse impacts associated with in water work during the construction of the bridge at Patrick Creek Location 2. This measure is no longer required because design and construction methods were changed, thus avoiding the adverse impact. Temporary falsework, which provides support for the concrete bridge as it is being built is strong enough to support itself, would be constructed above the wetted channel but possibly within the high water mark. It would be removed at the end of each construction season, typically approximately October 15 or whenever environmental permits dictate. No permanent structures would be placed within the ordinary high-water mark of the Middle Fork Smith River.

Mitigation no longer required:

Implement Compensatory Mitigation for Coho Salmon—Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast ESU
Compensatory mitigation measures will be implemented in consultation with NMFS and DFG for impacts on coho salmon. To offset impacts on coho salmon from this project, fish passage at culverts on other watercourses in the Smith River watershed will be identified and the fish passage improved. This work may be done in advance of this project, concurrently, and/or afterwards.

These measures will reduce potential impacts to fish species to less than significant under CEQA.

Osprey (California Species of Concern)

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to disturb nesting Osprey.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Department will avoid and minimize potential impacts to nesting osprey by conducting surveys during the nesting season and consulting with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the United States Forest Service if nesting osprey are detected within 0.5 miles of the project activities.

Migratory Birds (Migratory Bird Treaty Act)

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to impact nesting migratory birds through removal of active nesting in vegetation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Department will avoid and minimize potential impacts to nesting birds by removing vegetation outside the breeding season. Grass, tree, and shrub removal will take place between September 1 and March 1 to avoid impacts to nesting birds. If vegetation must be removed outside these dates, a biological survey for nesting birds must be conducted prior to the vegetation removal.

Amphibians and Aquatic Organisms

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to impact amphibians and other aquatic organisms when working within waterways.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

Work involving seasonal creeks/drainages will take place when they are dry and there is no precipitation occurring or anticipated. Work in the water of perennially flowing channels will take place during the dry season, generally between June 15 and October 15, to minimize impacts on amphibians and other aquatic organisms.

Marbled Murrelet (Federal Threatened Species)
Northern Spotted Owl (Federal Threatened Species)

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to disturb nesting marbled murrelets and nesting northern spotted owls.

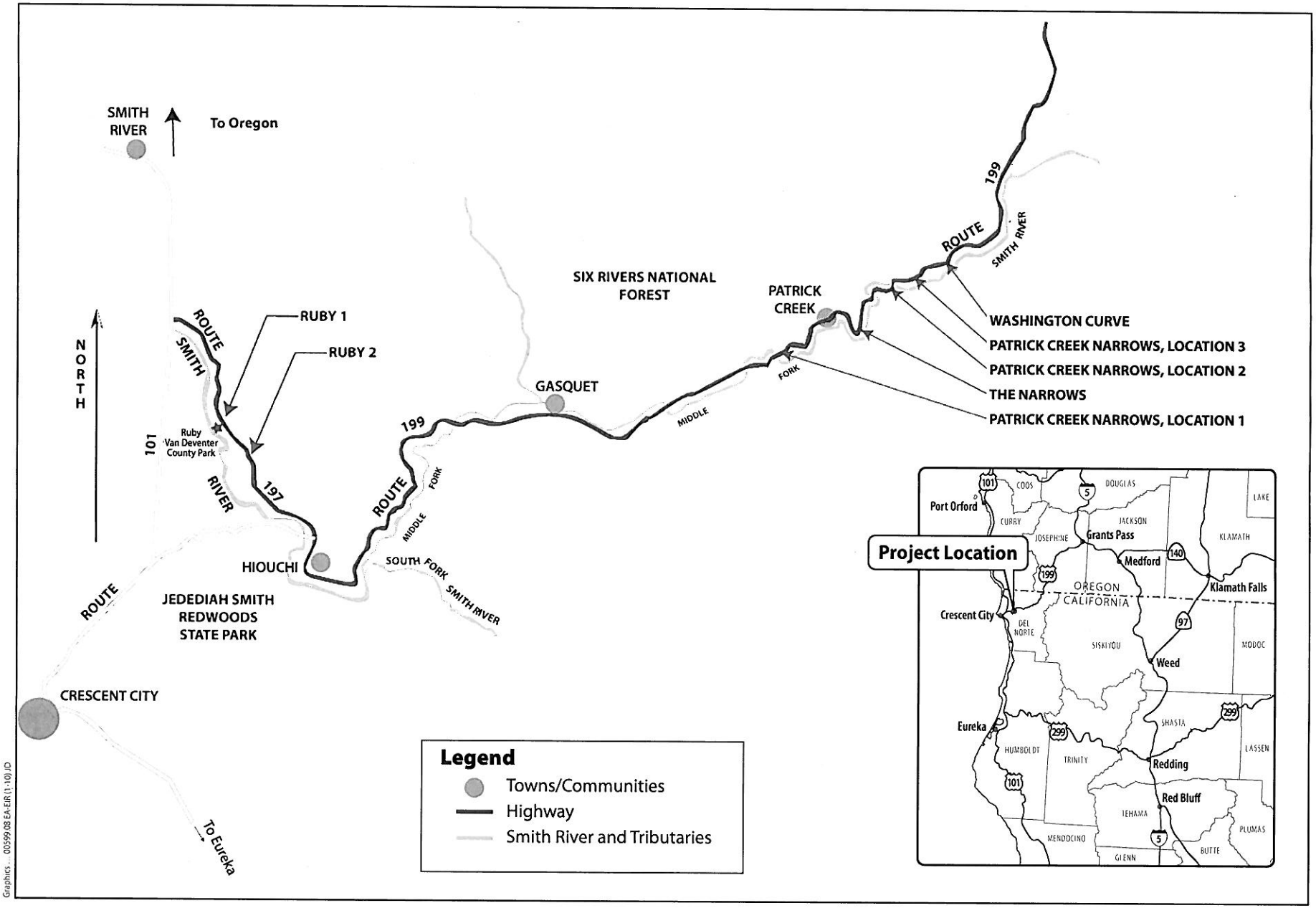
Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

To avoid adverse effects to northern spotted owl during the critical breeding season (March 1–June 30), no night work will take place and there will be no blasting. To avoid potential noise impacts on migrating marbled murrelet between March 24 and September 15, there will be no construction activity (including blasting) in the morning for a 3-hour period, starting 1 hour before sunrise and lasting until 2 hours after sunrise. In the evening, no construction activity involving equipment with noise levels in excess of ambient traffic noise (including blasting) will occur in a 3-hour window beginning 2 hours before sunset and lasting until 1 hour after sunset. Therefore, from July 1 to September 15, there can be night work starting 1 hour after sunset and ending 1 hour before sunrise. After September 15 (until March 1), there will be no restrictions on night work. Final work windows will be determined through Section 7 consultation and may include additional restrictions or restrictions based upon noise levels and frequency.

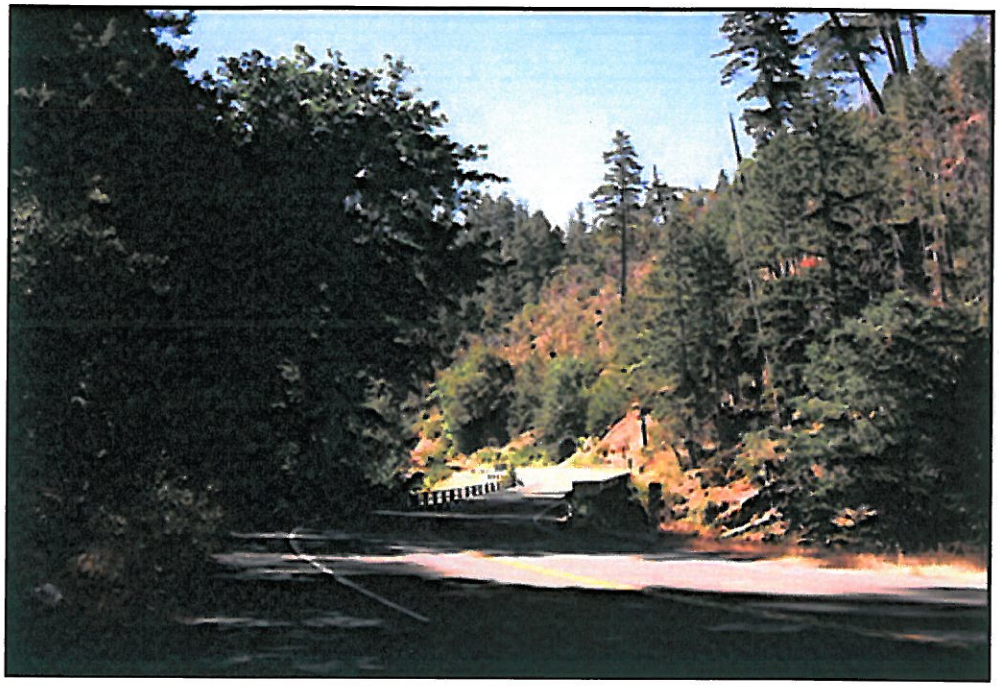
Documents can be accessed at:
Environmental Management Branch E1
Caltrans District 1 Office
1656 Union Street
Eureka, CA 95501



Graphics ... 00599.08 EA-EIR (1-10).JD

Figure 1-1
Project Vicinity and Location Map

197/199 Safe STAA Access Project



Summary

Final Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

State Clearinghouse Number: 2008082128

SR 197 and US 199 in Del Norte County
Ruby 1, 01-DN-197 PM 4.5; Ruby 2, 01-DN-197 PM 3.2-4.0;
Patrick Creek Narrows, 01-DN-199 PM 20.5-20.9, PM 23.92-24.08, & PM 25.55-25.65;
Washington/Narrows, 01-DN-199 PM 22.7-23.0, & PM 26.3-26.5
EA: 01-48110, 01-45490, 01-47940, 01-4500U

Prepared by the State of California Department of Transportation

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable Federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327.

April 2013

Caltrans

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

FOR

(197/199 Safe *STAA Access Project*)

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has determined that the Ruby 2: Two-foot Shoulders in Spot Locations, Patrick Creek Location 2: Downstream Bridge Replacement, and Washington Curve: Cut-slope Alternatives as well as the build alternatives for the other locations will have no significant impact on the human environment. This FONSI is based on the attached EA which has been independently evaluated by Caltrans and determined to adequately and accurately discuss the need, environmental issues, and impacts of the proposed project and appropriate mitigation measures. It provides sufficient evidence and analysis for determining that an EIS is not required. Caltrans takes full responsibility for the accuracy, scope, and content of the attached EA (and other documents as appropriate).

The environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable Federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried-out by Caltrans under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327.

April 10, 2013
Date

Caltrans District Director

197/199 Safe STAA Access Project

Final Environmental Impact Report/ Environmental Assessment and Section 4(f) Evaluation

SR 197 and US 199 in Del Norte County

Ruby 1, DN 197 PM 4.5 (EA 01-481100)

Ruby 2, DN 197 PM 3.2–4.0 (01-454900)

Patrick Creek Narrows, DN 199 PM 20.5–20.9 (Location 1), PM 23.92–24.08 (Location 2), PM 25.55–25.65 (Location 3) (EA 01-479400)

Washington/Narrows, DN 199 PM 22.7–23.0 and 26.3-26.5 (EA 01-4500U)

April 2013

Submitted Pursuant to: (State) Division 13, California Public Resources Code
(Federal) 42 USC 4332(2) C and 49 USC 303

STATE OF CALIFORNIA
Department of Transportation

Approved By: _____ Date: April 10, 2013

Charles C. Fielder
District 1 Director
California Department of Transportation

The following person may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

Sandra Rosas, Senior Environmental Planner
California Department of Transportation
1656 Union Street
Eureka, CA 95501
(707) 441-5730

Summary

Introduction

The California Department of Transportation (Department) is proposing to construct improvements at spot locations on State Route 197 (SR 197) and U.S. Highway 199 (US 199) in Del Norte County to be able to reclassify the routes as part of the Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) truck route network and to comply with federal and state legislation and regional programs, plans, and policies to allow STAA access. The proposed project is made up of five previously identified, separately proposed projects. These five projects were referred to as Ruby 1, Ruby 2, Patrick Creek Narrows (Locations 1, 2, and 3), the Narrows, and Washington Curve and include a total of seven locations. Since circulation of the original Draft Environmental Document in 2010, the Narrows and Washington Curve have been combined into one project. The proposed project for CEQA and NEPA review in this document combines these four projects into one (due to shared purpose and need) and makes use of the names of the original five projects to identify the location of each improvement currently proposed. All seven project locations currently have roadway geometries that can result in STAA trucks and other long-wheelbase vehicles offtracking across the double yellow line and entering the oncoming traffic lane. Additionally, the limited sight distances at all seven project locations do not allow enough time for drivers to adequately react to roadway conditions ahead and make timely decisions to avoid unexpected conditions ahead.

Overview of Project Area

The proposed project is located in Del Norte County on SR 197 and US 199, east of US 101. The project vicinity and locations are shown in Figure 1-1. Within the project limits, SR 197 and US 199 are rugged, two-lane conventional highways with tight curves and steep cut-slopes providing narrow traffic lanes with narrow shoulders, if shoulders exist.

SR 197 is the designated route for the movement of extralegal[1] truck loads between US 101 and the SR 197/US 199 intersection because it avoids traversing Jedediah Smith Redwoods State Park (located along the westernmost segment of US 199 between US 101 and the SR 197/US 199 intersection) and therefore minimizes impacts on the park and associated environmental resources. SR 197, also known as North Bank Road, is a curvilinear two-lane highway built in the 1930s. It is an important link between US 199 and US 101. SR 197 primarily serves regional and interregional traffic, providing access to homes and public recreational facilities along the Smith River, including Ruby Van Deventer County Park, which provides river access.

Within the project limits, US 199 traverses the canyon of the Middle Fork Smith River. US 199 within the project limits was built in the early 1920s. Highway attributes that characterize this

[1] An *extralegal load* is defined in CVC Section 320.5 as a single unit or an assembled item that, because of its design, cannot be reasonably reduced or dismantled in size or weight so that it can be legally transported as a load without a permit as required by CVC Section 35780. This code section does not apply to loads on passenger cars. Section 35780 requires permits for variances such as size and weight.

area include cliffs, rocky outcrops, dramatic views of the Middle Fork Smith River, and a tightly curved alignment. US 199 links US 101 north of Crescent City to I-5 in Grants Pass.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to adjust the roadway alignment to accommodate STAA truck travel, thereby removing the restriction for STAA vehicles, and improving goods movement. By making improvements to accommodate STAA trucks, the prohibition for STAA vehicles would be removed, the SR 197/US 199 route would be consistent with federal and state legislation and regional programs, plans, and policies, and the safety and operation of US 199 and SR 197 would be enhanced. This would improve goods movement, and also enhance safety of the routes for automobiles, trucks, and other large vehicles such as motor-homes, buses, and vehicles pulling a trailer.

The primary need for the project is the result of sub-standard curves; absence of, or substandard, shoulders along the traveled way; and narrow lanes. These geometric improvements are necessary within the project limits on the SR 197–US 199 corridor to allow safe STAA truck access, which would allow reclassification of the corridor as part of the STAA network of truck routes. Safety-enhancing improvements, including wider lanes, wider shoulders, longer-radius curves, and improved sight distances, are needed to provide a roadway that is easier to maneuver for all users. Both the Department and Del Norte County Local Transportation Commission support this need.

STAA access to the SR 197/US 199 corridor is needed because this corridor serves as Del Norte County's most direct transportation link to the interstate highway system (I-5 in Grants Pass, Oregon). The restrictions on STAA vehicles currently limit options for goods movement into and out of the county. The Del Norte County Local Transportation Commission considers US 199 to be the route that contributes the most to goods movement and mobility in support of the county's economy. SR 197 is the designated route for the movement of extralegal loads[2] between US 101 and US 199 (California Department of Transportation 1999a); therefore, it is a secondary component of this transportation link. The SR 197–US 199 corridor is important for the goods movement because Del Norte County has neither a railway nor a deep-water shipping port. Most heavy-freight trucks leaving Del Norte County are hauling export goods bound for distribution hubs and population centers via the most expeditious route.

In support of the Federal STAA, California passed Assembly Bill (AB) 866 in 1983 to implement the STAA provisions. The 2008 Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) and 2007 and 2011 Regional Transportation Plans (RTPs) support and request improvement of the 197/199 corridor to allow STAA truck access (Del Norte Local Transportation Commission 2007, 2008; LSC Transportation Consultants 2011). The 1999 Route Concept Reports for SR 197 and US 199 concluded that the routes should be widened and realigned to safely accommodate STAA trucks. This federal and state legislation and the regional

[2] An *extralegal load* is defined in California Vehicle Code Section 320.5 as a single unit or an assembled item that, because of its design, cannot be reasonably reduced or dismantled in size or weight so that it can be legally transported as a load without a permit as required by California Vehicle Code Section 35780. This code section does not apply to loads on passenger cars. Section 35780 requires permits for variances such as size and weight.

programs, plans, and policies are discussed in further detail elsewhere in this document: see Chapter 1, Section 1.2, "Purpose and Need," regarding State Assembly Bill 866 (1983) and the Route Concept Reports; see Chapter 2, Section 2.1.1.2 for the RTIP, and Section 2.1.5.1 for the RTP.

Alternative access to the interstate highway system is much less direct. Currently, STAA trucks that travel north on US 101 through Del Norte County to I-5 in Grants Pass must travel approximately 247 miles and more than 5 hours. Conversely, with STAA truck access on US 199, a one-way journey to I-5 in Grants Pass would be approximately 90 miles and less than 2 hours (Fehr & Peers 2010). To use US 199 to reach the interstate highway system presently, STAA truck cargo being transported from US 101 must be unloaded and transferred to shorter trucks before entering the SR 197–US 199 corridor; for trailers shorter than 48 feet, tractors can be swapped before entering the corridor.

Proposed Project

A summary of the proposed project is described below by project site. Alternatives are described where alternatives are proposed.

Ruby 1 (SR 197: PM 4.5)

One build alternative was considered at this project location. To improve the roadway, the curve of the road would be lengthened and shoulders would be increased from their existing 0- to 1-foot widths. On the southbound side, the new shoulder width would vary from 0 to 4 feet. Four-foot shoulders are proposed on the northbound side. To match the new roadway width, one existing culvert would be extended, one would be replaced, and a new drainage inlet would be installed. This alignment was designed specifically to avoid removal of large redwoods and minimize impacts.

Ruby 2 (SR 197: PM 3.2 to 4.0)

Three build alternatives were considered at this project location: Four-Foot Shoulders, Two-Foot Shoulders, and Two-Foot Widening in Spot Locations. Each alternative would improve the existing road curve, roadbed elevation, and roadway width. To match the new roadway width, two culverts would be extended or replaced, and one drainage inlet would be constructed. The approaches to eight private roads and one public road would be upgraded to match the modified roadway. The differences in the three alternatives are described briefly below.

Four-Foot Shoulders Alternative

This alternative would increase the shoulder widths to 4 feet on both sides of the roadway.

Two-Foot Shoulders Alternative

This alternative would increase the shoulder widths to 2 feet on both sides of the roadway.

Two-Foot Widening in Spot Locations Alternative (Preferred)

This alternative would increase the shoulder widths to 2 to 4 feet in spot locations. This alternative was designed specifically to avoid impacts to large redwood and minimize root impacts. This alternative was selected as the preferred alternative for this location. This alternative was changed slightly during the Design Exception process, and some areas of 2-foot shoulders were increased to 4-foot shoulders where there would not be substantial impacts to large trees. Please see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.7, "Identification of a Preferred Alternative," for further discussion.

Patrick Creek Narrows Location 1 (US 199: PM 20.5 to 20.7)

One build alternative was considered at this project location. The existing roadway curves would be improved and the roadway would be widened to accommodate two 12-foot-wide lanes and 4-foot shoulders throughout the majority of the location, transitioning to 1- to 4-foot wide shoulders at both ends of the location. To accommodate the widening and broader roadway curves, an approximately 190-foot-long, 5-foot-tall retaining wall is proposed along the river side of the road above a portion of the existing steep rock-armored riverbank. A Type 80 concrete barrier modified with architectural treatment would be installed on top of the wall. Two 18-inch culverts would be replaced with 24-inch culverts, and one existing 24-inch culvert would be lengthened, all with new drainage inlets.

Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2 (US 199: PM 23.9 to 24.3)

Three alternatives for improvements were considered at this project location: the Upstream Bridge Replacement, Downstream Bridge Replacement, and Bridge Preservation with Upslope Retaining Wall Alternatives. The alternatives would realign and widen the existing 11- to 12-foot lanes to 12 feet and would increase the shoulders to a width of 8 feet, transitioning to 2 to 8 foot shoulders at both ends of the project. A cut slope of 0.5:1 to 0.75:1 is anticipated. Because of the fractured nature of the bedrock, rock fall may be expected after construction. Therefore, a permanent rock-fall mitigation system may be needed. This could consist of a wire-mesh drape or incorporate a rock-fall catchment area at roadway level. One culvert within the limits of this project location would be replaced to match the new roadway width. The differences in the three alternatives are described briefly below. A sand trap would be installed along the inboard ditch. A new cross culvert will be added to carry the flow across the roadway. A new wall would be constructed on the outside of a curve to support the metal beam guardrail.

Upstream Bridge Replacement Alternative

This alternative would replace the existing Middle Fork Smith River Bridge with a bridge upstream from its current location. In addition a retaining wall/rock bolting[3] or rock net drapery would be constructed on the cut slope side of the highway. The retaining wall/rock bolting area would be approximately 400 feet long and up to 100 feet high.

[3] The purpose of rock bolting is to pin two planes of rock together by bolting the slipping plane to a solid rock plane. Rock bolts secure permanent steel bars that are grouted, tensioned, and locked into place with a metal faceplate on the final cut slope.

Downstream Bridge Replacement Alternative (Preferred)

This alternative would replace the existing bridge with a bridge downstream from the current location. In addition to the retaining wall discussed above under the common features, an additional retaining wall and sidehill viaduct would be constructed downstream from the new bridge extending for approximately 250 feet and transition directly into the proposed new bridge approach. This alternative was selected as the preferred alternative for this location. Please see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.7, "Identification of a Preferred Alternative," for further discussion.

Bridge Preservation with Upslope Retaining Wall Alternative

This alternative would retain the existing bridge but realign the roadway on either end of the bridge to allow large trucks to cross. In addition to the retaining wall discussed above under the common features an additional retaining wall/rock bolting or rock net drapery would be constructed on the cut slope side of the highway, measuring approximately 300 feet long and up to 100 feet high.

Patrick Creek Narrows Location 3 (US 199: PM 25.55 to 25.65)

One build alternative was considered for this project location. This alternative would increase the shoulder width to at least 8 feet on both sides of the road and eliminate the current "S" curve. To support the wider roadway, an approximately 180-foot-long wall up to an approximate height of 15 feet is proposed on the river side. Two 18" culverts within the limits of this project location would be replaced with 24" culverts. Drainage inlets would be installed at the inlets for three culverts.

The Narrows (US 199: PM 22.7 to 23.0)

One build alternative was considered for this project location. This alternative would increase lane widths to 12 feet and provide 0.5 to 2-foot shoulders. Widening would be accomplished by excavating into the existing cut slope. A 2-foot-wide unpaved drainage ditch would be added to the cut side of the road. One new culvert and drain inlet would be constructed. Also, an existing culvert and drain inlet would be replaced to match the new edge of pavement. In addition to roadway widening, isolated outcrops of overhanging or loose rock above the excavation limits would be stabilized with rock bolting or other means.

Washington Curve (US 199: PM 26.3 to 26.5)

Two build alternatives were considered at this project location: the Cut Slope and the Retaining Wall alternatives. The features common to both build alternatives include the following. These alternatives would improve the compound curve at this project location and increase the lane width to a minimum of 12 feet. One culvert would be replaced. The differences in the two alternatives are described briefly below.

Cut Slope Alternative (Preferred)

A new slope would be excavated on the cut slope side of the roadway and the shoulders would be widened to a minimum of 4 feet. Between the base of the cut slope and the edge of the paved shoulder, an 8 foot wide unpaved area would be provided to intercept and contain rockfall. This alternative was selected as the preferred alternative for this location. Please see Chapter 1, Section 1.3.7, "Identification of a Preferred Alternative," for further discussion.

Retaining Wall Alternative

This alternative would construct a retaining wall along the cut slope of the roadway to provide additional roadway width.

Preferred Alternatives

Ruby 2: Two-Foot Widening in Spot Locations

The Two-Foot Widening in Spot Locations was chosen by the Project Development Team as the preferred alternative for this location because it has the least impact on large trees. The other alternatives for this location had significant impacts on large redwoods. This alternative would not remove large redwoods and still meets the purpose and need of the project. See Section 1.3.7 for full description of preferred alternatives.

Patrick Creek Location 2: Downstream Bridge Replacement

The Downstream Bridge Replacement Alternative was chosen by the Project Development Team as the preferred alternative for this location because it has the least amount of impact. The Upstream and In-place Replacement Alternatives involved large cut slope excavations which could lead to unstable slopes and visual impacts. The Downstream Alternative was able to avoid in-stream work which led to less impact on Salmonids. See Section 1.3.7 for full description of preferred alternatives.

Washington Curve: Cut Slope Alternative

The Cut Slope Alternative was chosen by the Project Development Team as the preferred alternative for this location because the Retaining Wall was determined to have larger visual impacts. The wall would have been 900 feet long and 30 feet tall, making it the largest wall on the route and a substantial visual incongruity along the scenic route. The Cut Slope would be ¾ rock matching the current rocky views of the canyon. See Section 1.3.7 for full description of preferred alternatives.

CEQA/NEPA Environmental Document

The proposed project is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and is subject to state and federal environmental

review requirements. Project documentation, therefore, has been prepared in compliance with both the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The Department is the lead agency under NEPA and CEQA. In addition, FHWA's responsibility for environmental review, consultation, and any other action required in accordance with applicable Federal laws for this project is being, or has been, carried out by the Department under its assumption of responsibility pursuant to 23 United States Code (USC) 327.

Some impacts determined to be significant under CEQA may not lead to a determination of significance under NEPA. Because NEPA is concerned with the significance of the project as a whole, it is quite often the case that a "lower level" document is prepared for NEPA. One of the most commonly seen joint document types is an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Assessment (EIR/EA).

Following receipt of public comments on the Draft EIR/EA and Partial Recirculated Draft EIR/Supplemental EA, this Final EIR/EA was prepared. The Partial Recirculation involved only Section 2.3.1 Natural Communities and Section 2.3.3 Plants, and addressed additional information on potential effects to trees and an additional special status plant species. This Final EIR/EA contains responses to comments on the Draft EIR/EAs, and identifies the preferred alternatives. The Department plans to certify the EIR and issue Findings, since the Department has eliminated or substantially lessened all significant effects on the environment where feasible, as shown in the Findings. The Department determined that a Statement of Overriding Considerations under CEQA was unnecessary since the Department finds that the proposed project will not result in unavoidable significant environmental effects; all potentially significant effects will be mitigated to below a level of significance. The Department plans to issue a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) under NEPA since the Department finds that the proposed project as a whole would not result in significant environmental effects.

Project Impacts

Table S-1 summarizes the potential project effects after measures to avoid and minimize environmental harm are implemented. For every project site and alternative in the table, each potential effect is categorized as having either "no impact," if it would not affect a given environmental topic; "no adverse impact," if it would not have a significant, harmful effect on an environmental topic; or "adverse," if it could have a significant effect on an environmental topic. Note that the term "adverse" may have a different threshold or definition, depending on whether the impact is being considered under federal or state laws. For example, a finding of May Affect, Likely to Adversely Affect for a federally listed species could be proposed for a variety of impact types, including harassment, under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA). That finding may or may not be determined to be significant, depending on whether anticipated impacts are temporary/permanent and the kind and level of impact (e.g., harassment only, versus killing, and the anticipated number of individuals or population(s) that might be affected). Conversely, harassment is not considered under the California ESA, so harassment would not be considered adverse or significant. Details of each environmental topic, potential effect, and associated avoidance, minimization, and/or mitigation measures are discussed in Chapter 2.

Coordination with Other Public Agencies

Table S-2 describes the permits, reviews, and approvals required for project construction. This information is reiterated in Table 1-5 in Chapter 1.

Table S-2. Permits and Approvals

Agency	Permit/Approval	Status
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)	Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation for threatened and endangered species	Completed
National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS)	ESA Section 7 consultation for threatened and endangered species	Completed
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 authorization for fill of waters of the United States	Ongoing
U.S. Department of Agriculture Forest Service	Coordination based on Forest Service sensitive and Northwest Forest Plan species, tree removal permit**,** scenic byway and Wild and Scenic River concurrence for the Middle Fork Smith River (US 199), Section 4(f) coordination and concurrence, and coordination for conducting work within the Department's right-of-way easement held by the Forest Service	Completed
Del Norte County Parks Department	Temporary easement in Ruby Van Deventer County Park for driveway improvements	Completed
California Department of Fish and Wildlife	California Fish and Game Code Section 1602 streambed alteration agreement and California Wild and Scenic Rivers coordination through the Section 1602 application process (Smith River coordination via 1602 agreements for SR 197 locations, and Middle Fork Smith River coordination via 1602 agreements for US 199 locations)	Ongoing
National Park Service	Wild and Scenic River concurrence for the Smith River	Completed
North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board	CWA Section 401 water quality certification and coverage under the Department's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System permit (Order 00-06-DWQ)	Ongoing
North Coast Unified Air Quality Management District	Formal notification submitted a minimum of 14 days before construction, permit for compliance with national emission standards for hazardous air pollutants, acceptance of dust control plan, and acceptance of lead compliance plan	Not yet initiated

Table S-1. Summary of Potential Effects at SR 197 and US 199 Project Sites

Environmental Topic	Potential Effect	SR 197 Sites and Build Alternatives				US 199 Sites and Build Alternatives								No Build (No Action) Alternative
		Ruby 1	Ruby 2			Patrick Creek Narrows Location 1	Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2			Patrick Creek Narrows Location 3	The Narrows	Washington Curve		
			Four-Foot Shoulders	Two-Foot Shoulders	Two-Foot Shoulders in Spot Locations (Preferred)		Upstream Bridge Replacement	Downstream Bridge Replacement (Preferred)	Bridge Preservation with Upslope Retaining Wall			Cut Slope (Preferred)	Retaining Wall	
Land Use Consistency	Consistency with Crescent City General Plan	Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent	Consistent		Consistent
	Consistency with County General Plan	Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent	Consistent		Consistent
	Consistency with Six Rivers National Forest/Smith River National Recreation Area	Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent	Consistent		Consistent
	Consistency with Mission and Regional Transportation Improvement Program (RTIP) of Del Norte Local Transportation Commission	Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent	Consistent		Inconsistent
	Consistency with Smith River Scenic Byway	Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent	Consistent		Consistent
	Consistency with Existing Land Uses	Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent			Consistent	Consistent	Consistent		Consistent
Wild and Scenic Rivers	Potential Impacts to Wild and Scenic Rivers	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No adverse impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
Parks and Recreation	Temporary Effects on Parks and Recreation Facilities During Construction	No adverse impacts				No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Growth	Potential for Growth Impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Community Character and Cohesion	Temporary Construction-Related Access and Circulation Impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Temporary Impacts on Parking During Construction	No adverse impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Relocations and Real Property Acquisitions	Property Acquisitions for Permanent Right-of-Way	No impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No impacts	No adverse impacts	No impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
Utilities/Emergency Services	Temporary Delays for Law Enforcement, Fire, and Emergency Service Providers	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Traffic and Transportation/ Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities	Traffic Delays During Construction (see Chapter 1, Tables 1-2 and 1-3)	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Visual/Aesthetics	Change the Existing Visual Character or Quality of Project Site and its Surroundings	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No impacts
Cultural Resources	Potential Cultural Resource Impacts	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
Hydrology and Floodplain	Potential Hydrology and/or Floodplain Impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No adverse impacts
Water Quality and Storm Water Runoff	Potential for Reduced Water Quality from Increased Storm Water Runoff	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No impacts
	Potential for Reduced Water Quality from Erosion	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts
	Potential for Reduced Water Quality from Loss of Wetland and Other Jurisdictional Waters	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts

Table S-1. Continued

Environmental Topic	Potential Effect	SR 197 Sites and Build Alternatives				US 199 Sites and Build Alternatives								No Build (No Action) Alternative
		Ruby 1	Ruby 2			Patrick Creek Narrows Location 1	Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2			Patrick Creek Narrows Location 3	The Narrows	Washington Curve		
			Four-Foot Shoulders	Two-Foot Shoulders	Two-Foot Shoulders in Spot Locations (Preferred)		Upstream Bridge Replacement	Downstream Bridge Replacement (Preferred)	Bridge Preservation with Upslope Retaining Wall			Cut Slope (Preferred)	Retaining Wall	
Geology/Soils/Seismic/ Topography	Potential for Erosion, Landslide, and Rock Fall	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts
	Potential for Construction-Related Soil Erosion and Sedimentation	No impacts	No impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Potential Impacts on Worker Safety during Blasting Operations	No blasting	No blasting			No blasting	No adverse impacts			No blasting	No adverse impacts	No blasting	No blasting	No impacts
	Potential Impacts on Worker Safety from Rock Fall during Construction of Cut Slopes	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No impacts	No impacts
	Potential for Debris to Enter River During Bridge Demolition	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
Hazardous Waste/ Materials	Potential for Hazardous Material Spills During Construction	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Potential for Exposure to Aerially-Deposited Lead	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Potential for Release of Hazardous Waste/Materials Associated with Construction, Traffic, or Roadway Maintenance	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Potential for Release of Hazardous Waste/Materials Associated with the Removal or Modification of Facilities or Structures	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Potential Impacts Associated With Naturally-Occurring Asbestos	No impacts	No impacts			No adverse impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts
Air Quality	Temporary Increase in Ozone Precursor (ROG and NOx), CO, and PM10 Emissions during Grading and Construction Activities	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Release of Naturally-Occurring Asbestos Fibers into the Air During Grading and Construction Activities	No impacts	No impacts			No adverse impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts
Noise and Vibration	Potential Disturbance from Construction Noise Levels (Non-Blasting)	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Potential for Disturbance to Nearby Noise-Sensitive Land Uses from Controlled Blasting Activities	No blasting	No blasting			No blasting	No adverse impacts			No blasting	No adverse impacts	No blasting		No impacts
Natural Communities (See Section 2.3.1 for detailed comparisons of effects by alternative)	Permanent removal of natural communities at a given project location	No adverse impacts	Adverse impact	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Temporary disturbance and effects on natural communities.	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Permanent removal of redwood trees with a dbh of 36 inches or more	No impacts	Adverse impact	No impacts		No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
	Permanent removal of trees other than redwoods	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No impacts	No adverse impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Temporarily Restrict the Passage of Fish, including Anadromous Fish	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts

Table S-1. Continued

Environmental Topic	Potential Effect	SR 197 Sites and Build Alternatives				US 199 Sites and Build Alternatives								No Build (No Action) Alternative
		Ruby 1	Ruby 2			Patrick Creek Narrows Location 1	Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2			Patrick Creek Narrows Location 3	The Narrows	Washington Curve		
			Four-Foot Shoulders	Two-Foot Shoulders	Two-Foot Shoulders in Spot Locations (Preferred)		Upstream Bridge Replacement	Downstream Bridge Replacement (Preferred)	Bridge Preservation with Upslope Retaining Wall			Cut Slope (Preferred)	Retaining Wall	
Wetlands and Other Waters	Temporary impacts to wetlands and/or other waters	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
(See Section 2.3.2 for detailed comparisons of fill by alternative)	Permanent impacts to wetlands and/or other waters	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Plant Species	Permanent removal of native plant habitat at a given project location	No impacts	No impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
(See Section 2.3.3 for detailed comparisons of effects by alternative)	Permanent Effects on Specific Special-Status and CNPS List 4 Plants	No impacts	No impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Animal Species	Temporary disturbance to special-status animal species and their habitat	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
(See Section 2.3.4 for detailed comparisons of effects by alternative)	Permanent removal of habitat for animal species	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
	Effects on Chinook salmon	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
	Effects on coastal cutthroat trout	No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts	No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts
Threatened and Endangered Species	Temporary disturbance to threatened and endangered species and their habitat	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
(See Section 2.3.5 for detailed comparisons of effects by alternative)	Permanent removal of habitat for threatened and endangered species	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No impacts
Invasive Species	Potential for proposed location improvements to promote spread of invasive species	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts			No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts	No adverse impacts		No adverse impacts
Potential Cumulative Impacts to Environmental Resources	Contribution to Cumulative Loss of Old-Growth Redwood Trees	No adverse impacts	Adverse impact	No adverse impacts		No impacts	No impacts			No impacts	No impacts	No impacts		No impacts

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1120 N STREET, MS-52
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
P. O. BOX 942873
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
FAX (916) 653-2134
(916) 654-4245
http://www.catc.ca.gov

May 30, 2013

Ms. Eileen Cooper
Friends of Del Norte
P.O. Box 229
Gasquet, CA 95543

RE: State Route (SR) 197/199 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) Access Project

Dear Ms. Cooper,

I am writing in response to your March 11, 2013 and May 11, 2013 email correspondence (see enclosure) with respect to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the SR 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project in Del Norte County.

As you are aware, the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the Lead Agency for purposes of complying with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). As such, your letter and attachments were provided to Caltrans on March 15, 2013 for consideration prior to finalizing the EIR for this project (see enclosure). On April 10, 2013 Caltrans approved the FEIR for this project and on April 15, 2013 filed a Notice of Determination with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research.

In your May 11, 2013 email correspondence, you requested to be informed of any upcoming Commission actions related to this project. At the June 11, 2013 Commission meeting, Caltrans will present the FEIR for this project to the Commission for consideration of the environmental impacts as set forth in the final environmental document and will request that the Commission approve the project for future consideration of funding.

The June 11th Commission meeting will begin at approximately 11:00AM and will be held at the Tsakopoulos Library Galleria located at 828 I Street, Main Floor Galleria, Sacramento, CA. The meeting will also be webcast. The meeting agenda, meeting materials, and a link to the meeting webcast are available on the California Transportation Commission website: www.catc.ca.gov

If you have any questions please contact Susan Bransen, Chief Deputy Director, at (916) 654-4245.

Sincerely,

ANDRE BOUTROS
Executive Director

Enclosure

c: Commissioners, California Transportation Commission
Charles Fielder, California Department of Transportation
Karla Sutliff, California Department of Transportation
Katrina Pierce, California Department of Transportation

eileen cooper
<upsprout@yahoo.com>

05/11/2013 10:05 AM

Please respond to
eileen cooper
<upsprout@yahoo.com>

To Douglas Remedios <Douglas_Remedios@dot.ca.gov>, "Commissioners@dot.ca.gov" <Commissioners@dot.ca.gov>, Karla Sutliff

cc "upsprout@yahoo.com" <upsprout@yahoo.com>, donna thompson <kitacoastdonna@charter.net>, Sandra Jerabek <jerabek@jeffnet.org>, Joe Gillespie

bcc

Subject Fw: SR 197/199 STAA Access Project RDEIR Letter and Attachments

Friends of Del Norte, *Committed to our environment since 1973*

A nonprofit, membership based conservation group, **advocating sound environmental policies for our region.**

PO Box 229, Gasquet, CA 95543

ATT: California Transportation Commission, staff and commissioners

The above attachments were sent March 11, 2013, to the Commission when the EIR/EA for this project, STAA access along Hwys 199/197, was under review as a draft. The FEIR/EA and NOD is now formally finalized by Caltrans District1, without address to our concerns. The traffic analysis remains fundamentally flawed by completely failing to evaluate the most dramatic traffic changes to this roadway: the cumulative effects of STAA trucks being induced from Interstate 5 (I-5) to the relatively low volume traffic of 199/197, a Scenic Byway that runs along the Wild and Scenic Smith River Canyon, Smith River National Recreation Area, Redwood National/State Park, and a rural residential area, with about 70 driveways. The responses within the FEIR are dismissive without basis. The finding of no significant impacts for a wide range of concerns is rooted in a fundamentally flawed traffic analysis. These issues include no significant traffic increases, therefore no significant increases in shipping of hazardous materials along a road that will be substandard, and that follows the Wild and Scenic Smith River, the crown jewel of California, and Crescent City's only source of drinking water. The consequences from unevaluated, unmitigated, and likely significant increases of traffic also include: dangerous egress to and from 70 driveways, inappropriate and dangerous traffic mixes with school bus stops, pedestrians, including children, recreational activity such as hiking and biking along the roadway,etc. This road is an inappropriate candidate for STAA addition, and we object to any action related to this purpose.

The roadway will remain dangerously substandard throughout most of its length in Del Norte County with minimal improvements that require mandatory safety design exemptions. Please inform us of any safety exemption approval process. This should not be a ministerial exemption, as the character and nature of the roadway is not typical:

it is very windy, and follows a canyon wall and a Wild and Scenic River - where any mistake cost lives and threatens water quality.

Our organization FODN, wants to remain informed as to scheduling of any actions related to this project that the commission may be considering, such as authorizing your approval of these flawed findings; allocation of any monies towards further planning or construction; etc. Please keep us informed and contact us at this email address, and phone # 707-465-8904. We feel that it is urgent that you understand the serious flaws within this evaluation, and dangerous consequences of pursuing any approvals. We wish to attend all meetings regarding any agenda item related to this Hwy 199/197 STAA access project. We would be happy to meet with you to discuss this further. We also clearly indicate that this project does not meet most of the criteria of the STAA (Surface Transportation Assistance Act), such as safety, and inappropriate character of the roadway.

Thank you, Eileen Cooper

----- Forwarded Message -----
From: Douglas Remedios <Douglas_Remedios@dot.ca.gov>
To: Commissioners@dot.ca.gov; upsprout@yahoo.com; Karla Sutliff <karla.sutliff@dot.ca.gov>
Cc: CTC Assistants <CTC_Assistants@dot.ca.gov>; Laura Pennebaker <laura.pennebaker@dot.ca.gov>; Susan Bransen <susan.bransen@dot.ca.gov>
Sent: Friday, March 15, 2013 12:42 PM
Subject: SR 197/199 STAA Access Project RDEIR Letter and Attachments

Commissioners,

On March 11th, the Commission, as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, received correspondence from the Friends of Del Norte regarding concerns with the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the SR 197/199 STAA Access project which is proposed for construction in Del Norte County. For your information, please see Attachments 1 - 3 as well as the attached letter transmitting this correspondence to Caltrans who is the CEQA Lead Agency for this project.

(See attached file: Attachment 1 FODN Letter to Representatives and FHWA.pdf)(See attached file: Attachment 2 Mara Feeney 9-26-12.pdf)(See attached file: Attachment 3 Smith Engineering 11-5-12.pdf)(See attached file: Letter to Caltrans SR 197-199 Safe STAA Access RDEIR.pdf)

Laura A. Pennebaker
California Transportation Commission
916.653.7121

laura.pennebaker@dot.ca.go

CC;Douglas Remedios


Attachment 1 FODN Letter to Representatives and FHWA.pdf


Attachment 2 Mara Feeney 9-26-12.pdf


Attachment 3 Smith Engineering 11-5-12.pdf


Letter to Caltrans SR 197-199 Safe STAA Access RDEIR.pdf

Douglas Remedios/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov

03/15/2013 12:42 PM

To Commissioners, upsprout@yahoo.com, Karla Sutliff/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov@DOT

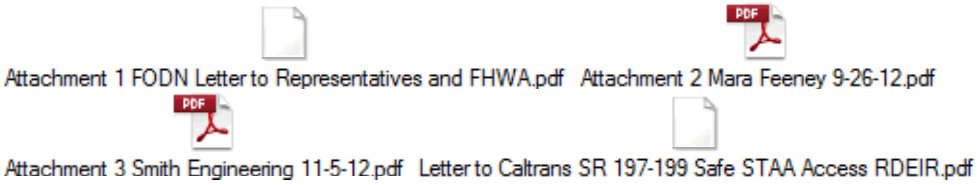
cc CTC Assistants, Laura Pennebaker/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov@DOT, Susan Bransen/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov@DOT

bcc

Subject SR 197/199 STAA Access Project RDEIR Letter and Attachments

Commissioners,

On March 11th, the Commission, as a Responsible Agency under CEQA, received correspondence from the Friends of Del Norte regarding concerns with the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the SR 197/199 STAA Access project which is proposed for construction in Del Norte County. For your information, please see Attachments 1 - 3 as well as the attached letter transmitting this correspondence to Caltrans who is the CEQA Lead Agency for this project.



Laura A. Pennebaker
California Transportation Commission
916.653.7121
laura.pennebaker@dot.ca.go

CC;Douglas Remedios

Laura Pennebaker/HQ/Caltrans/CA Gov

05/30/2013 10:54 AM

To

cc

bcc

Subject Fw: FODN letter of review for STAA addition of California Hwys 199/197

---- Forwarded by Susan Bransen/HQ/Caltrans/CAGov on 03/11/2013 12:42 PM -----

eileen cooper <upsprout@yahoo.com>

03/11/2013 12:20 PM

Please respond to eileen cooper <upsprout@yahoo.com>

To "Sofia.pereira@asm.ca.gov" <Sofia.pereira@asm.ca.gov>, "John.driscoll@mail.house.gov" <John.driscoll@mail.house.gov>, "governor@governor.ca.gov" <governor@governor.ca.gov>, "California.FHWA@dot.gov" <California.FHWA@dot.gov>, "andre.boutros@dot.ca.gov" <andre.boutros@dot.ca.gov>, "susan.bransen@dot.ca.gov" <susan.bransen@dot.ca.gov>, "teresa.favila@dot.ca.gov" <teresa.favila@dot.ca.gov>

cc eileen cooper <upsprout@yahoo.com>

Subject FODN letter of review for STAA addition of California Hwys 199/197

Please carefully review the attachments concerning the review of STAA addition for California Hwys 199/197. We would be open to talking and meeting with you for followup.

Eileen Cooper, vice president of FODN, 707-465-8904, upsprout@yahoo.com

staa letter to representatives and FHWA.doc Smith Engineering_11052012.pdf Mara Feeney letter and resume.pdf

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

1120 N STREET, MS-52
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
P. O. BOX 942873
SACRAMENTO, CA 94273-0001
FAX (916) 653-2134
(916) 654-4245
http://www.catc.ca.gov

March 15, 2013

Mr. Charles Fielder, Director
Caltrans-District 1
P.O. Box 3700
Eureka, CA 95502-3700

RE: State Route (SR) 197/199 Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) Access Project

Dear Mr. Fielder,

The California Transportation Commission, as a Responsible Agency, has received the attached letters and emails, prepared by concerned citizens opposing the SR 197/199 STAA Access Project in Del Norte County.

As the CEQA Lead Agency for this project, please consider these concerns with respect to the potential significant effects of the project, alternatives, and mitigation measures which would substantially reduce the effects.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Susan Bransen, Deputy Director, at (916) 653-2090.

Sincerely,

ANDRE BOUTROS
Executive Director

c: Commissioners, California Transportation Commission
Karla Sutliff, Deputy Director of Project Delivery, California Department of Transportation
Eileen Cooper, Vice-President, Friends of Del Norte

Received by CTC: March 11, 2013

Friends of Del Norte, *Committed to our environment since 1973*

A nonprofit, membership based conservation group, **advocating sound environmental policies for our region. PO Box 229, Gasquet, CA 95543**

ATT: Congressman Jared Huffman, Assemblyman Wes Chesbro, Governor Brown's Office, and California Transportation Commission, FHWA

The Friends of Del Norte (FODN) has been actively involved in guiding local environmental project review for 40 years, including submitting comments to Caltrans District 1 regarding STAA truck access on Hwys 199/197 since 2008. When our community first promoted STAA access for Hwys 199/197, several false assumptions were made: that STAA access could be done safely, and that it would greatly benefit the local economy and was therefore needed. These assumptions have been proven wrong within the framework of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR/EA). The DEIR/EA is currently under review. Recently submitted expert testimony now on record substantiates that this proposed route is inconsistent with STAA requirements, and a determination of inconsistency is the only reasonable choice at this point in time. The DEIR/EA also reveals that there is negligible need for the project. We now ask that you recind support for the proposed Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA) addition of Hwy 199/197. We would be open to meeting with you to discuss this issue further.

The proposed STAA route on Hwy 199/197 does not meet basic safety guidelines, and other conditions required by the criteria in Section 658.9 of the STAA. This is a dangerous and ill conceived project that will result in more accidents, endangering the public and the water quality of the Wild and Scenic Smith River.

The proposed STAA route on Hwy 199/197 fails to provide adequate geometrics to support safe operations, considering sight distance, pavement width, horizontal curvature, shoulder width, bridge clearances and load limits, traffic volumes and vehicle mix, and intersection geometry.

Please review expert testimony by Smith Engineering, regarding engineering safety issues, and testimony by Mara Feeney, a planning consultant with 35 years experience. Their professional review confirms safety hazards will result in significantly more accidents, and will jeopardize the water quality of the Wild and Scenic Smith River. Testimony is attached and also available from the Caltrans District 1 office, or EPIC:

http://www.wildcalifornia.org/action-issues/rein-in-caltrans/wild-and-scenic-smith-river-the-197199-project/

There has been a local political push to attain STAA truck access on Hwys199/197 with negligence regarding public safety and without concern for actual need, despite the great cost of providing STAA truck access along Hwys 199/197. The local trucking evaluation of the DEIR/EA substantiates that there is negligible local economic need for STAA access (also refer to Mara Feeney letter of review). The DEIR also reveals that it is impossible to provide safe STAA access by using the proposed cut slopes, because our winding narrow river canyon highway cannot be widened adequately due to geologic instability of the cut slopes. The project requires many design exceptions that will result in more accidents, deaths and truck spills (Smith Engineering).

Caltrans District 1 disregards design guidelines for public safety, and is willing to allow a faulty narrow winding road to carry STAA trucks, a road that already has a poor safety record. STAA traffic will jeopardize the health and beauty of a Wild and Scenic River, greatly increasing the risk of truck spills, and risking the water quality of endangered salmonid habitat, as well as Crescent City's only drinking water.

Moreover, STAA through truck traffic is likely to greatly increase as a result of creating a frost free STAA truck loop over Hwy 199/197 and Hwy 101 that diverts I-5 truck traffic around Siskiyou Summit in winter. Even just a small percentage of diverted I-5 truck traffic would result in significant and dangerous increases of truck traffic for Hwys 199/197 and the geologically unstable Hwy 101 south of Crescent City. These truck diversions will happen during winter storm events, with hazardous driving conditions. The DEIR/EA has failed to identify and

evaluate this cumulative impact, despite public concern (and now available expert testimony). The DEIR/EA misleads the public into believing that there will be insignificant increases in traffic.

Consistency Analysis:

§ 658.3 Policy statement.

The Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) policy is to provide a **safe and efficient** National Network of highways that can safely and efficiently accommodate the large vehicles authorized by the STAA. This network includes the Interstate System plus other qualifying Federal-aid Primary System Highways.

§ 658.11 Additions, deletions, exceptions, and restrictions.

To ensure that the National Network remains substantially intact, FHWA retains the authority to rule upon all requested additions to and deletions from the National Network as well as requests for the imposition of certain restrictions. FHWA approval or disapproval will constitute the final decision of the U.S. Department of Transportation.

Additions.

(1) Requests for additions to the National Network, including justification, shall have the endorsement of the Governor or the Governor's authorized representative, and be submitted in writing to the appropriate FHWA Division Office. Proposals for addition of routes to the National Network shall be accompanied by an analysis of suitability based on the criteria in § 658.9.

(2) Proposals for additions that meet the criteria of § 658.9 and have the endorsement of the Governor or the Governor's authorized representative will be published in the FEDERAL REGISTER for public comment as a notice of proposed rulemaking (NPRM), and if found acceptable, as a final rule.

§ 658.9 National Network criteria.

(a) The National Network listed in the appendix to this part is available for use by commerical motor vehicles of the dimensions and configurations described in §§ 658.13 and 658.15.

(b) For those States with detailed lists of individual routes in the appendix, the routes have been designated on the basis of their general adherence to the following criteria.

(1) The route is a geometrically typical component of the Federal-Aid Primary System, serving to link principal cities and densely developed portions of the States.

Hwy 199/197 is an atypical route in that it does not link densely developed portions of the State. Crescent City is a small rural town located in a remote rural area. Even with the proposed safety improvements, a substandard, narrow, rural winding canyon road remains, following the Wild and Scenic Smith River. With numerous design exceptions, Caltrans ignores their own safety guidelines and jeopardizes the public welfare and the water quality of the Smith River. (Smith Engineering, as attached)

(2) The route is a high volume route utilized extensively by large vehicles for interstate commerce.

Hwy 199/197 is a relatively low volume truck route, and the DEIR/EA shows that there is negligible local economic need for the project. There are alternate STAA routes linking the California North Coast to I-5. Hwy 199/197 is a scenic byway that travels along the Wild and Scenic Smith River through a National Recreation Area. It is a winding rural river canyon drive. This route is most extensively used by visitors for recreational purposes, and by local residents for daily commutes from the river communities of Gasquet and Hiouchi, and to access essential services, such as medical services in Medford on I-5.

Hwy 197 (North Bank Road) is currently a rural residential route with 72 driveways directly entering onto the road. Current truck traffic is insignificant on this part of the route. There will be a great increased safety hazard to the residents and to the trucks along this road due to likely increased truck traffic.

(3) The route does not have any restrictions precluding use by conventional combination vehicles.

(4) The route has adequate geometrics to support safe operations, considering sight distance, `severity and length of grades, pavement width, horizontal curvature, shoulder width, bridge clearances and load limits, traffic volumes and vehicle mix, and intersection geometry.

Professional expert testimony on record by Smith Engineering and Mara Feeney (as attached) substantiates that the proposed STAA Hwy 199/197 will not have adequate geometrics to support safe operations, considering sight distances, pavement width, horizontal curvature, shoulder width, bridge clearances, load limits, traffic volumes and vehicle mix, and intersection geometry.

(5) The route consists of lanes designed to be a width of 12 feet or more or is otherwise consistent with highway safety. ***(response to 4 above)***

(6) The route does not have any unusual characteristics causing current or anticipated safety problems. ***(response to 4 above)***

Expert testimony by Mara Feeney, a planning consultant with 35 years experience substantiates that the DEIR/EA fails to evaluate likely large increases of induced STAA truck traffic from I-5.

STAA through truck traffic is likely to greatly increase as a result of creating a frost free STAA truck loop over Hwy 199/197 and Hwy 101 that diverts I-5 truck traffic around Siskiyou Summit in winter. Even just a small percentage of diverted I-5 truck traffic would result in significant and dangerous increases for Hwy 199/197 and 101 south of Crescent City. The DEIR/EA has failed to identify and evaluate this cumulative impact, despite public concern. The DEIR/EA misleads the public into believing that there will be insignificant increases in traffic.

Even with the proposed safety improvements, a substandard, narrow, rural winding canyon road remains, following the Wild and Scenic Smith River. With numerous design exceptions, Caltrans ignores their own safety guidelines and jeopardizes the public welfare. Trucks will not be able to pass safely on a route that will still have sub-standard widths and shoulders, multiple turns that are too tight to navigate safely, especially for the posted speeds, and short recovery sight distances. Combined with likely significant increases in truck traffic in the worst winter driving conditions, this will become a more dangerous route.

There will likely be a significant increase in risk of truck cargo spills along Hwys.199/197, threatening the water quality of the Wild and Scenic Smith River, a refuge for California's last salmon, and the only drinking water source for Crescent City. The City has only a 3 to 5 day reserve water capacity.

Hwy 197 is currently a rural residential highway with 72 driveways directly entering onto the road. Current truck traffic is insignificant on this part of the route. There will be a great increased safety hazard to the residents and trucks along this road due to increased truck traffic.

Safety is also inadequately addressed on Hwy 199, as there are no improvements planned between Hiouchi and Gasquet, which has the highest accident rate on Hwy 199, and is most used for local commutes.

Hwy 199 already has a rate that is 4 times the average for a similar hwy.
Hwy 101 south of Crescent City already has Fatality-Plus-Injury and Total Collision Rates at eight and eleven times the statewide average for a similar highway

(c) For those States where State law provides that STAA authorized vehicles may use all or most of the Federal-Aid Primary system, the National Network is no more restrictive than such law. The appendix contains a narrative summary of the National Network in those States. [49 FR 23315, June 5, 1984, as amended at 53 FR 12148, Apr. 13, 1988]

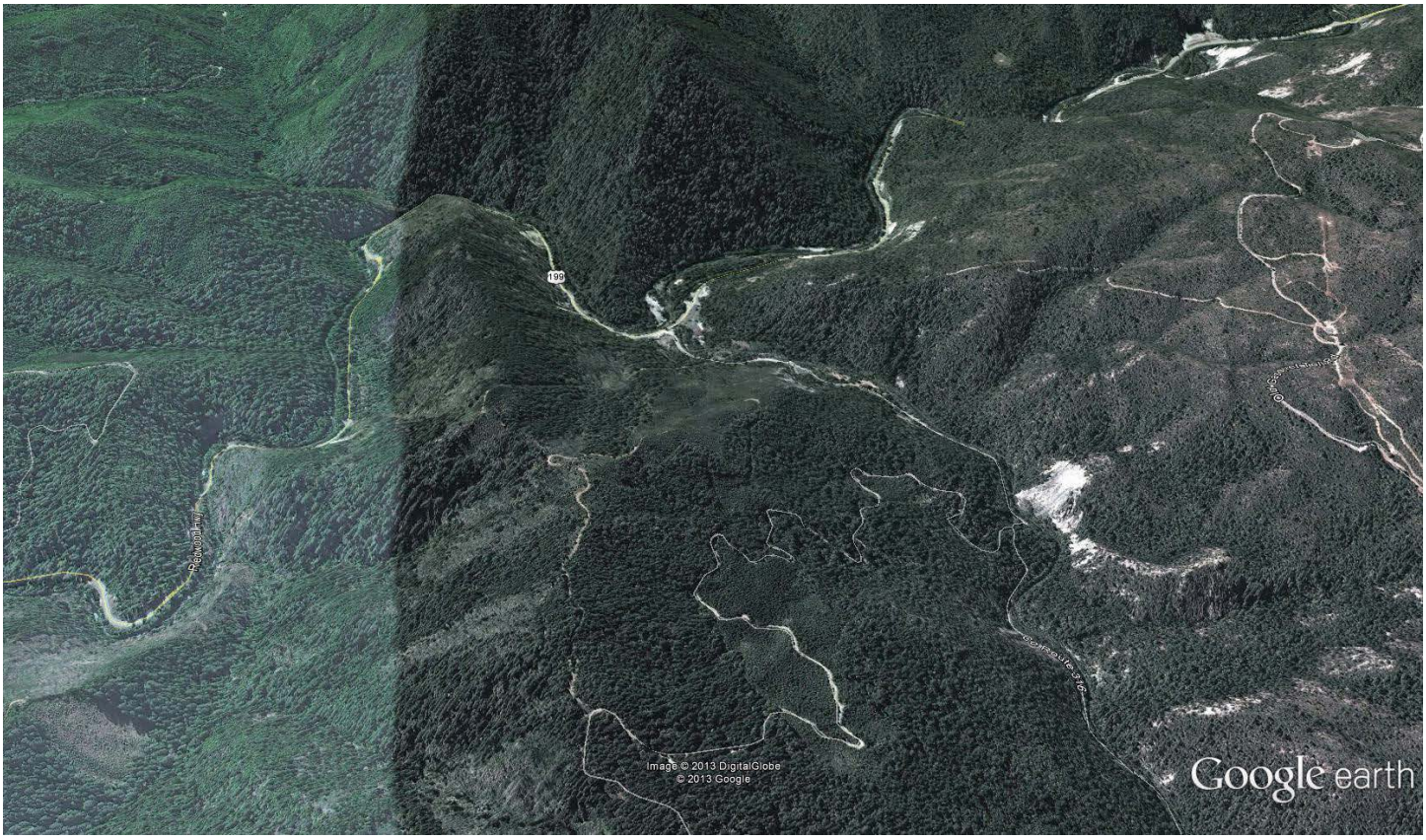
The currently adopted California Transportation Policy Priority is to better maintain the current infrastructure, as the Federal and State transportation budgets have severe restraints and an overload of maintenance projects. There will be a significant and impractical economic burden and endangerment of the public welfare in trying to maintain Hwy 199 and the geologically unstable Hwy 101 at Last Chance Grade under likely heavy truck traffic increases, an already unstable and problematic area prone to slides. This cumulative impact has been ignored by Caltrans project developers and the DEIR. There will also be a significant acceleration in maintenance projects that will substantially degrade riparian vegetation and aesthetics along the Wild and

Received by CTC: March 11, 2013

Scenic Smith River. The current submitted expert testimony clearly points to the fact that it is wasteful of taxpayer money to further pursue STAA status for Hwy 199/197.

Thank you, Eileen Cooper, vice president on behalf of the FODN board. 707-465-8904; upsprout@yahoo.com

The Wild and Scenic Smith River and Hwy 199. ***Caltrans ignores their own safety guidelines and jeopardizes the public welfare. STAA Trucks will not be able to pass safely on a route that will still have sub-standard widths and shoulders, multiple turns that are too tight to navigate safely, especially for the posted speeds, and short recovery sight distances. Combined with likely significant increases in truck traffic in the worst winter driving conditions, this will become a hazardous route.***



California Transportation Commission Staff

Andre Boutros
Executive Director
(916) 654-4245
andre.boutros@dot.ca.gov

Douglas Remedios
Administrative Assistant to the Executive Director
(916) 651-5220
douglas.remedios@dot.ca.gov

Susan Bransen
Deputy Director
(916) 653-2090
susan.bransen@dot.ca.gov

Teresa Favila
Assistant Deputy Director
(916) 653-2064
teresa.favila@dot.ca.gov

Dina Noel
Supervising Transportation Engineer
(916) 653-7665
dina.noel@dot.ca.gov

CALIFORNIA (HDA-CA)
650 Capitol Mall
Suite 4-100
Sacramento, CA 95814

Web address:
http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/cadiv/
E-mail address:
California.FHWA@dot.gov

Phone: 916-498-5001
Hours: 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM PST
Fax: 916-498-5008

Division Administrator	Vincent P. Mammano	916-498-5015
Chief Operating Officer	Michael J. Duman	916-206-2068
Asst. Division Administrator, So. California Office	Richard E. (Rick) Backlund	213-894-4560

California Governor Jerry Brown
State Capitol
1st Fl.
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax:(916)558-3160
Tel:(916)445-2841
email:
governor@governor.ca.gov

Jared Huffman, John Driscoll
317 Third St. Suite 1, Eureka, CA
707-407-3585
John.driscoll@mail.house.gov
Wes Chesbro, Sofia Pereira
710 E St. Rm 150, Eureka CA
707-445 7014
Sofia.pereira@asm.ca.gov

MARA FEENEY & ASSOCIATES
Community Relations and Socioeconomic Analysis
19 Beaver Street, San Francisco CA 94114

September 26, 2012

To Whom It May Concern:

The Friends of Del Norte (FODN) contacted me earlier this year and asked me to provide an objective review of the environmental impact analysis that Caltrans District 1 prepared for the proposed 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project (June 2010), as well as the comments that FODN has submitted on this project to date, and to offer my professional opinion on both.

I am a planning consultant with approximately 35 years of experience in community involvement and environmental review for complex and often controversial projects throughout the United States and Canada. My experience includes participating in multidisciplinary environmental analyses for numerous infrastructure development and improvement projects in California, including work for Caltrans on proposed roadway improvement projects throughout the State, including District 1 (see resume attached).

Although a Final EIR/EA for the 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project was scheduled to be released this summer, instead the Draft EIR/EA is now being re-circulated for public review and comment, with additional information provided on potential impacts to trees. For a project as important as this one, in a setting with such extraordinary environmental resources, Caltrans should have used the opportunity of re-circulating the draft document to provide additional information and address other key issues that have been raised by FODN--including the faulty assumptions underpinning the truck traffic analysis, the weakness of the economic impact analysis, and the lack of a cumulative traffic impact analysis.

Estimates of short-term increased truck traffic on US199 in the Draft EIR/EA are based on a very limited survey of local businesses (based on a small number of brief survey questions), in which 80 percent of the respondents stated they did not need and would not use STAA trucks on US199 if the project were implemented. Only three local businesses stated that they would use STAA trucks on US199 to lower shipping costs, but one of these has subsequently closed and another ships products only two months each year. Based on these local business surveys, the analysts concluded that Crescent City would enjoy substantial economic benefits from the project yet there would be a negligible short-term increase in truck traffic on US199 associated with local business demand.

The traffic analysis also uses data from a study done by a reputable transportation analyst at UC Berkeley, Dr. Robert Cervero, whose research indicated that long term induced effects of creating new access generally occur at a rate of 3.9 times the short term induced growth rate. However, in direct correspondence with FODN, Dr. Cervero indicated that the referenced research had been done "for road expansion projects in suburban parts of California thus how germane the results might be for a rural part of the state can be questioned."1

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1 E-mail message from Robert Cervero, University of California Transportation Center, to Eileen Cooper, FODN. April 9, 2012.

Furthermore, the analysis does not include any consideration of additional through truck traffic that might be encouraged by the creation of a new STAA truck traffic loop connecting I-5 via SR 197/US 199 to US 101 south through Richardson Grove. Caltrans evaluated proposed changes to US101 at Richardson Grove, a state park with significant old growth redwood resources south of Eureka, in a separate environmental document.2 These two proposed projects combined, however, would make it possible for STAA trucks to travel from I-5 at Grants Pass to San Francisco using a scenic coastal route—and, more importantly, one that would allow them to avoid chaining requirements in the Siskiyou range during winter storms. The Draft EIR/EA prepared for the 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project, based on limited survey information and a questionable multiplier, concludes that there would be no significant increase in heavy truck traffic and therefore no significant increase in associated safety risks to local residents, visitors, or the environment.

The project purports to improve safety—but the STAA truck off tracking modeling appears to have assumed unrealistic speeds. In addition, the project proposes no roadway improvements at all for those segments of US199 that now have the highest accident rates.

STAA access on SR 197/US 199 is also purported to be good for the local economy, but the Draft EIR/EA identifies no fiscal benefit to local government entities, nor does it document that the project in any way would result in lower consumer costs for products sold in Del Norte County. Clearly, the lack of STAA network status on SR 199 has not deterred businesses from locating to Crescent City to date. Despite its relatively small population size and remote location, Crescent City has succeeded in attracting such big box retailers as Home Depot and WalMart, as well as a major state prison with continuous resupply needs.

A handful of surveyed business owners in Del Norte County speculated that as many as 30 new local jobs *might* be created if the proposed roadway improvements are made. At a project cost of $22-34 million (depending on which alternative is selected), this would be an expenditure of on the order of $1 million per new job in a few businesses, but the economic analysis does not consider potential jobs that would be lost due to switching from local trucking firms that own predominately CA legal trucks to outside firms offering STAA trucks for deliveries, nor does it calculate potential job losses in the tourism sector (which employs more people than any other private sector in the County) resulting from the deterioration of prime scenic and recreational values and perceptions of increased safety and environmental risks.

Caltrans is proposing a large investment of public funds for little clear economic benefit, and for a project that would have substantial impacts on quality of life by: taking private property; decreasing existing buffers between highway right-of-ways and adjacent homes and businesses; increasing the risk of fatal traffic accidents3 due to increased heavy truck traffic; increasing the risk of toxic spills into the Smith River corridor (threatening community water supply sources, world class sport fishing, and critical habitat for several endangered species), and degrading scenic values4. The project would increase heavy truck traffic on a road that local residents and businesses depend upon for daily access, but that is also on a significant scenic byway that attracts many visitors annually for bird watching, sightseeing, camping, river rafting, boating and sport fishing—activities that would be disrupted by additional heavy truck traffic. These visitors are the backbone of the tourism industry that employs more people in Del Norte County than any other private sector of the economy, as noted in the Draft EIR/EA.

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2 In response to lawsuits filed by local environmental organizations, a federal judge ordered Caltrans to redo the environmental analysis for this project on April 4, 2012.

3 According to DOT statistics, while large trucks represent only 3 percent of all registered vehicles, they are responsible for 12-13% of all crash fatalities.

4 According to the draft EIR, "A vast area of cut slope with a rock fall mitigation system would greatly degrade the existing visual quality of the roadway corridor" (DEIR p. 2.1-86).

The land use analysis fails to identify project conflicts with adopted plans and policies pertaining to the protection of scenic, recreational and biological resources in the Smith River corridor, such as the Smith River National Recreation Area Management Plan, which states that "the management emphasis for the middle Fork-Hwy199 management area shall be on maintaining wildlife values and providing for a full range of recreation uses, with particular emphasis on the scenic and recreation values associated with the Smith River, old growth redwoods, and CA state highway 199." Designation of US 199 as part of the STAA truck network would not be consistent with this management priority.

Caltrans' own Route Concept Report, prepared in 1989 (well after the passing of the Surface Transportation Act of 1982, allowing 53' truck trailers), acknowledges "the geophysical constraints of the relatively narrow, steep and rocky Smith River Canyon" and concludes that environmental concerns and ecological sensitivities make SR 199 "a poor candidate for extensive upgrading." That report recommended leaving SR 199 "basically a 2-lane, conventional highway, with passing lanes." The report recommended developing additional passing lanes as necessary only to maintain acceptable Level of Service, and concluded that: "This Route Concept should serve as a guide for long range planning of improvements to Route 199. It will protect the State's investment in the Route, while recognizing environmental and financial constraints which will not allow the programming of extensive improvements for this highway."

It seems that local lobbying and calls for better STAA truck access to Crescent City have caused Caltrans to abandon this previous (and apparently rational) position. The proposed project will result in an increase in heavy truck use on a roadway whose main value is in providing access to environmental and recreation resources along the scenic Smith River Canyon, as well as access to the redwood forests that comprise one of California's two UNESCO World Heritage sites (the other being Yosemite). Enjoyment of these scenic drives and the natural resources that surround them would be marred by driver concerns about long, heavy trucks careening around curves in areas that would still have considerable variability in lane widths, shoulder widths, and sight distances. There is already a documented history of truck accidents on US199, including fatalities and diesel spills threatening the Smith River. The existing roadway is so narrow and twisting that the improvements Caltrans has proposed at seven locations along the roadway to allow STAA truck access cannot all meet Caltrans engineering design guidelines and will require mandatory design exceptions.

US199 is a vanishingly rare resource: a winding country road that meanders through an area with extraordinary recreational and scenic values. This road—one of only ten routes included in the Forest Service Scenic Byway Network--traverses rolling terrain in the most heavily visited part of the Smith River National Recreation Area, which lies within a National Forest. For much of its length, US 199 follows the course of the Smith River, the only major river system in California that remains undammed, with the longest stretch (over 300 miles) of designated as Wild and Scenic River of any river in the United States. Together with several other roadways, Route 199 is part of the "Mystic Corridor" connecting Crater Lake National Park in Oregon to the redwoods and the California coast near Crescent City.

In my view (both personal and professional), there is still a place for winding country roads along scenic rivers with exceptional scenic, recreational, and ecological values. We should be trying to preserve them, rather than "improving" them to become part of the STAA truck network. Such resources will become more highly valued and sought after over time, as they become more scarce. The irony is that the creation of a STAA truck route (with uncertain truck traffic and safety impacts) may kill the very goose that remains capable of laying golden eggs in Del Norte County in the future—namely, tourism in this area that is known for its pristine river, extraordinary parks, and scenic resources.

Furthermore, the proposed improvements, which *at great cost* would provide the bare minimum of changes needed to meet current STAA route qualification requirements are not likely to be a sensible long term investment. In the 1960s, the industry standard in trucking was a 40' trailer; in the 1970s it was 48', in the late 1980s, 53' trailers were authorized. The American Trucking Association recently has been seeking Congressional approval for even longer, heavier trucks, despite evidence that heavy trucks are the major source of highway and bridge damage, and that heavy trucks do not pay their fair share of the cost of roadway deterioration and bridge replacement. The continuation of these trends into the future is reasonably foreseeable.

I have no stake whatsoever in this project. Nonetheless, on behalf of FODN, I urge local elected officials and the State of California to reconsider prioritizing funding for this project, which has been declared to be good for public safety and the Del Norte County economy based on wishful thinking and inadequate information pertaining to environmental impacts.

Sincerely,

MARA FEENEY & ASSOCIATES

Mara Feeney
Principal

MARA FEENEY & ASSOCIATES
Community Relations and Socioeconomic Analysis
19 Beaver Street, San Francisco CA 94114

RESUME OF MARA FEENEY

EDUCATION

University of British Columbia: M.A. in Community and Regional Planning, 1977
Bryn Mawr College: A.B. with Honors in Anthropology, 1973

PROFESSIONAL HISTORY

Principal, Mara Feeney & Associates, 1983-present
Woodward-Clyde Consultants, Senior Staff Scientist, 1980-1983
Sonoma State University, Instructor in Environmental Impact Reporting, 1982
Strong, Hall and Associates, Senior Socioeconomist, 1978-1980

REPRESENTATIVE EXPERIENCE

Mara Feeney is a Planner with over thirty years of professional experience in environmental consulting, specializing in community impact analysis, socioeconomic impact assessment, housing market analysis, land use studies, recreation impact analysis, farmland impact analysis, public involvement and relocation studies. Her assignments have included evaluation of potential impacts to land use, regional employment and income, population and demographic characteristics, public finance, housing, community infrastructure, public services and quality of life. Ms. Feeney is thoroughly familiar with the requirements of NEPA and CEQA (as well as both FHWA and Caltrans) for growth inducement, land use and socioeconomic analysis, and Environmental Justice evaluations. In 1982, she was an Instructor in Environmental Impact Reporting at Sonoma State University. In addition, Ms. Feeney has extensive recent experience completing community impact analyses, relocation reports and section 4(f)/303(c) analyses for transportation improvement projects throughout California. Relevant project experience is summarized below.

For Placer County Transportation Planning Authority, Caltrans and FHWA, she completed the socioeconomic impact analysis, environmental justice analysis, Section 4(f) analysis, and growth inducement analysis for the proposed Placer Parkway, a new 15-mile transportation facility that would connect the Roseville-Rocklin-Lincoln area with the Sacramento Airport vicinity. She also peer reviewed the land use and farmland impact analyses and produced the CIA report.

For Caltrans and the Fresno County Transportation Authority, she completed socioeconomic and land use impact analyses for construction of State Route 168 through urban neighborhoods in Fresno, California. In addition, she was responsible for preparing relocation reports for the proposed project, which potentially would displace over 900 households.

For URS Corporation and the California High Speed Train Authority, she evaluated potential community impacts associated with proposed alternatives for the new High Speed Train alignments for the Fresno to Bakersfield and Bakersfield to Palmdale segments.

For Caltrans District 1, she completed the community impact analysis for Proposed improvements to the US 101 corridor from Eureka to Arcata. This work Included a survey of potentially affected local businesses, as well as identification of Environmental Justice impacts to residents of an adjacent mobile home park.

For Caltrans and the Fresno County Transportation Authority, she was responsible for socioeconomic impact analysis, farmland impact rating and relocation studies for proposed improvements to State Route 180 east of the City of Fresno.

For Caltrans District 6, she completed a major growth study for southeastern Madera County. This project included developing population, housing and employment projections for southeastern Madera County for the year 2020 for scenarios with and without a future UC campus. Inputs were used to model future traffic to determine needed improvements to the Route 41 bridge connecting Fresno and Madera Counties.

For Caltrans District 1, she evaluated the land use and socioeconomic impacts, as well as Section 4(f) recreation resource impacts, associated with proposed improvements to Route 101 on Last Chance Grade south of Crescent City, involving changes to the historic Redwood Highway alignment through the Del Norte Coast Redwoods State Park, part of a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

For Caltrans and The Duffey Company, Ms. Feeney completed the land use and socioeconomic analysis for proposed widening of State Highway 156 through the community of San Juan Bautista in San Benito County.

For the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, she analyzed the potential land use and socioeconomic impacts associated with the proposed Dublin/Pleasanton heavy rail extension.

For San Francisco's Municipal Railway (MUNI), she assisted in the preparation of the EIS/EIR for the Third Street Light Rail line to connect Visitacion Valley and the Bayview/Hunters Point neighborhoods to the new UCSF campus and the downtown.

For the Port of Oakland, she has completed socioeconomic, land use and growth inducement analyses for the proposed 42-foot deep dredging project aimed at keeping the Port of Oakland competitive in international container shipping.

For American High Speed Rail and Woodward-Clyde Consultants, she prepared a work plan for analysis of socioeconomic and land use impacts associated with the proposed Los Angeles to San Diego "bullet train."

For San Francisco Airport, she completed analysis of the impacts of new runways in San Francisco Bay on recreation resources along the peninsula from San Francisco to Palo Alto. She also worked on the land use, farmland and socioeconomic analyses for this controversial project.

For Caltrans, she completed the socioeconomic and land use impact analyses, as well as the conceptual relocation plan, for site selection of the proposed CalTrain Peninsula Commute Service Rail Maintenance facility. Four potential sites were evaluated--in Brisbane, Santa Clara, San Jose and Gilroy.

For the Water Emergency Transportation Agency, she completed the analysis of community impacts associated with proposed improvements to the Downtown San Francisco Ferry Terminal to accommodate future new ferry services. This included identifying impacts to population, employment, housing, regional growth and environmental justice considerations.

For Reliant Energy Company, she analyzed land use plans and policies consistency, and prepared the land use compatibility and farmland impact sections for the Application for Certification for a proposed 500 MW power plant in a rural agricultural area of Colusa County, California. She also peer reviewed the socio-economic and environmental justice analyses for this proposed project.

For the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, she evaluated impacts to agricultural and recreational resources associated with the Water System Improvement Project to replace aging water transport facilities carrying drinking water from the Hetch Hetchy Valley in Yosemite to the Bay Area.

For Mirant Corporation, she provided peer review services for the socioeconomic and Environmental Justice analyses for the proposed Potrero Power Plant in San Francisco and served as an expert witness at CEC evidentiary hearings for this controversial urban energy project.

For the Emeryville Redevelopment Agency, Ms. Feeney provided public participation consulting services for a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Brownfields Pilot project grant aimed at developing a regional approach to groundwater monitoring that would facilitate the City's reuse of abandoned and underutilized industrial properties.

For the SFPUC Water Department, she managed public outreach activities for the environmental review process for the Chloramine Conversion project. This required publication of notices and conducting of public meetings in both rural and urban locations potentially affected by the project.

For Pacific Refining Company, she analyzed the potential local economic benefits (tax revenues, local purchasing, employment and income) associated with planned modifications to a petroleum refinery in Hercules, California.

For Southern Pacific Transportation Company, she developed and implemented a Community Relations Plan required by a DHS Consent Order for the remedial investigation of an abandoned rail yard in Brisbane. She conducted interviews and held community meetings in the Visitacion Valley and Little Hollywood neighborhoods of San Francisco, the closest residences to the site.

For the Bureau of Land Management and Frontier Pipeline Company, she was Task Leader for the assessment of socioeconomic impacts for a crude oil pipeline proposed for construction through five counties in Wyoming.

For the U.S. Navy, she completed housing market analyses for facilities and personnel stationed in the San Francisco Bay Area (at Hunters Point and at Naval Air Station Moffett Field), as well as at the Navy's Postgraduate School in Monterey and at a Naval Air Station located in Fallon, Nevada.

For the Bureau of Land Management, Montana State Office, she designed a sample survey of homes and businesses on the Northern Cheyenne and Crow Indian Reservations. She conducted primary research to obtain information about the Reservation economies which was used in BLM's input-output model for Federal coal leasing in southeastern Montana.

For the U.S. Navy and the City of San Francisco, Ms. Feeney was responsible for analyzing the social and economic impacts associated with the proposed reuse alternatives being considered for both the Hunters Point Shipyard and Treasure Island.

For the Bureau of Land Management and La Sal Pipeline Company, she was Task Leader for the assessment of socioeconomic impacts for a shale oil pipeline proposed for construction through six counties in Colorado and Wyoming. This project included extensive interviewing with local elected officials and planners in affected counties and communities.

For West County Landfill, Inc., she revised and helped DTSC to implement the Public Participation Plan for RCRA closure of the Hazardous Waste Management Facility at the West County Landfill located in North Richmond, California. She was invited to be an Expert Witness in CERCLA and RCRA public participation requirements for the cost recovery suit associated with closure of this hazardous waste landfill.

In Cortez, Colorado, she mediated a conflict between Shell Oil Company and local human services agencies concerning community impacts that might result from a proposed CO^2 wellfield development, then facilitated local acceptance of an appropriate mitigation package.

For Del Norte County, California, she provided advice on the development and implementation of a public outreach program to enhance citizen involvement in assessing the potential environmental effects of a controversial nickel mine.

SMITH ENGINEERING & MANAGEMENT

November 5, 2012

Sent via electronic transmission: Jason meyer@dot.ca.gov

Mr. Jason Meyer
California Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 3700
Eureka, CA 95502-3700

Subject: Del Norte 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project

P12010

Dear Mr. Meyer:

As requested by Friends of Del Norte and the Environmental Protection Information Center, I have reviewed the Caltrans Draft Project Report (hereinafter "the PR") and supporting documentation for the Routes 197/199 Safe STAA Access Project in Del Norte County My qualifications to perform this review include registration as both a Civil and Traffic Engineer in California and 44 years professional consulting practice in these fields. I have extensive experience in matters of highway design and highway safety in California. My professional resume is attached. My comments follow.

Assessment In Brief

Contrary to the repeated statements in the PR, introduction of the longer STAA trucks and construction of the measures necessary to enable them to theoretically navigate the route combination is likely to increase rather than decrease crashes. The PR and related documents fail to evaluate this probability.

A simpler program of improvements not involving provision for STAA trucks could improve traffic safety at lower cost and with less invasive changes to the roadside environment.

Supporting evidence for these points is provided below.

TRAFFIC • TRANSPORTATION • MANAGEMENT
5311 Lowry Road, Union City, CA 94587 tel: 510.489.9477 fax: 510.489.9478

Why the Project May Render the Route Combination Less Safe

What the Project does is to define a minimum program of improvements that *theoretically enable* an STAA truck to be driven through the route combination without crossing the centerline, running off the road or striking a roadside obstacle. We use the words "theoretically enable" advisedly, because the facilities that would be provided by the Project require that the drivers of STAA trucks and other long vehicles to select and maintain a virtually perfect line of travel through some curves to avoid crossing the centerline, running off the road or otherwise striking a roadside obstruction. For example, the fact sheet for exceptions to mandatory design standards for The Narrows (DN 199 PM 22.7 – 23.0) included as PR Attachment F-4 indicates that the swept path width for an STAA truck on the proposed alignment at this location is 12 feet wide. This means, as the cited attachment indicates, that with only 12-foot travel lanes and 2-foot shoulders on either direction of the roadway under the Project, the driver of an STAA vehicle has only 1 foot of tolerance to either side of the perfect line through the curve; any more deviation either way and the passage involves a hazardous incident. Ordinarily, if there were 12-foot lanes and shoulders conforming to the applicable mandatory 8-foot width standard, an STAA driver would have 4 times as much leeway to either side of the perfect line through the curve to negotiate it safely than the Project provides.

The driver's difficulty in picking and maintaining a near perfect line through this particular location are compounded by three closely spaced reversing curves, each of shorter radius (sharper curvature) than the mandatory minimum radius for a 40 mph design speed (respectively only 59%, 68% and 73 percent of the mandatory design minimum). Hence, the driver's task is not just picking and maintaining a near-perfect line through a narrow area, but doing so on thrice-reversing curves of substandard sharpness.

Moreover, the driver's difficulty is further compounded by the fact that these curves restrict stopping sight distance to that adequate for 30 miles-per-hour, and to only 25 miles-per-hour for a 120-foot section rather than the 40 mph approach speed. In other words, the driver must slow down from normal speed, pick and maintain a near perfect line through a narrow area on a set of sharp, triple-reversing curves at a place where line-of-sight to that perfect line-of-travel is restricted.

These compounding conditions, to say nothing of other normal ones like high wind, wet pavement and dark of night, lead to an obvious conclusion that the proposed Project's features impose too challenging task on big-rig drivers and as the result, frequent hazardous incidents involving failure to stay with the narrow 1-foot envelope of tolerance to either side of the perfect line will occur. Consequently, even with the proposed roadway modifications, introduction of

STAA trucks to the route combination will increase hazard to the traveling public. It is insufficient to claim that the geometric features of the route, though continuing to be substandard with the Project improvements, are better than what exists and that an STAA truck, if perfectly driven under perfect conditions can safely negotiate the route combination. If Caltrans is determined to authorize STAA trucks on this route, it must define and implement an improvement plan that provides a normal envelope of safety for the variations from the perfect driving line that a normal, alert truck driver running the entire length of the route would typically experience including the variations that result from the vaguaries of wind, wet pavement and dark of night. If such an improvement plan is too costly or is too detrimental environmentally, then Caltrans must admit it is infeasible to approve STAA trucks on this route combination.

When the consequences of all the Project's exceptions to mandatory design standards are viewed in combination as in the above example, it becomes obvious that Caltrans attempt to justify designating this route combination for STAA trucks while avoiding the enormous cost and environmental consequences of improving the road to, or even close to, minimum mandatory standards, involves a significant compromise to public safety.

A second safety issue, aside from crashes involving big rigs, is how the Project's roadway features affect the safety of other roadway users. The PR's record shows that most of the crashes involve run-off-the-road or (to a much lesser extent) centerline crossover incidents where excessive speed, wet pavement and nighttime darkness were factors. The PR and its Exceptions To Mandatory Standards attachments assert that the added shoulder widths at most of the locations where work is contemplated will create an increased recovery area that will enable motorists to avert many crashes. This optimistic assertion ignores two salient contrarian factors.

- The added shoulder width at most locations is marginal in relation to mandatory minimum shoulder width and to true clear recovery zones.
- The increases in curve radius and other improvements to curve alignments and introduction of engineered superelevation on curves will tend to increase traffic speed, thereby increasing the propensity of run-off incidents and increasing the width of recovery area needed to avoid crashes.

Below we examine how the Project's features affect these considerations at each work location.

Ruby 1

Although the PR Table associated with Section 5 claims that Ruby 1 meets all mandatory design standards, the actual approved Fact Sheet Exceptions to

Mandatory Design Standards for this location reveals that there are two exceptions and appears to have omitted a third. The first exception is to the mandatory shoulder width of 4 feet applicable at this location. The Project design does provide the required 4 foot shoulders on the inside of curves because it is needed to accommodate STAA offtracking. But on the outside of the curves, where run-offs due to speed, darkness and wet pavement most frequently occur, a variable shoulder ranging from as little as 0.5 feet (as little as 12.5 percent of mandatory minimum) up to the mandatory 4 feet would be provided (this is changed from the existing shoulder of 0.5 feet to 3.4 feet). The changes to the outside shoulders are obviously very marginal. Meanwhile, the Project would also increase curve radii in the area from seriously non-conforming 300 and 430-foot lengths to 575 and 550-foot radii and improve superelevation, though not fully conforming to mandatory standards as noted in the Exceptions Fact Sheet. These changes will *increase* the comfortable speed through the curves from 36 to 42 miles-per-hour (a 16.7 percent increase). This change in comfortable speed would offset the benefits of marginally increased recovery areas the Project provides on the outside of curves, the place on curves where most run-offs occur due to excess speed, wet pavement and darkness.

Interestingly, this overall section of Route 197 has a purported design speed and posted speed limit of 55 miles-per-hour although advisory speeds of 35 and 30 miles-per-hour are posted on the subject curves. This poses several issues.

- The standard curve radius for a 55 mile-per-hour design speed is 1000 feet.[1] The PR and the Exception Fact Sheet make no mention that the curve radii proposed in the Project at this location, although improved, remain only approximately half the mandatory minimum for the design- and posted speed.
- The fact that the posted speed limit on the specific Ruby 1 area approach is 55 miles-per-hour makes it likely that many vehicles will enter the subject curves at speeds well above the advisory speed signs of 30 and 35 miles-per-hour or the comfortable speed of 42 miles-per-hour. Contrary to the claim of the PR and its exceptions attachment, this makes it unlikely that the Project's marginal improvement to recovery area would reduce the incidence of the types of collisions experienced at the subject location.
- The PR admits that traffic enforcement on the subject routes is sparse. This makes it likely that many vehicles will attempt to travel faster than the posted and advisory speed limits.
- *Highway Design Manual* Topic 309.1(2) indicates that on conventional highways a clear recovery zone of 20 feet minimum is desirable. Although this is a desirable, not mandatory standard, it illustrates the sheer

[1] Value interpolated from Caltrans *Highway Design Manual* Table 203.2.

inadequacy of the proposed 0.5 to 4-foot shoulders in this segment of the Project, especially with the changes to the curve radii and superelevation engendering increased speeds.[2]

In summary, there is no reasonable support for the PR's assertion that safety will be enhanced by the proposed marginal increases in shoulder width (recovery area) would reduce crash incidence and substantial evidence that changes in speed characteristics engendered by the Project would cause greater crash incidence.

Ruby 2

The concerns in this segment of the Project are similar to those described above for Ruby 1. The Project would widen shoulders at these curves from a variable 0- to 2 feet to a consistent 2 feet (minimum mandatory standard at this location is 4 feet). The Project would also change the radius of curves at this site from 200 feet to a still substandard 400 feet (minimum mandatory standard for 40 mile-per-hour speed limit is 550 feet. Sight distance, though improved, would remain 23% short of the mandatory minimum for 40 miles-per-hour. Rather than decreasing collision incidence, the increased speed engendered by the improved curve radius, compounded by the remaining sight distance deficiency, would likely offset any benefits of the increased recovery area provided by consistent 2-foot shoulders and result in increased crash incidence.

Patrick Creek Location 1.

The proposed horizontal curve and shoulder changes at this location appear as a reasonable response to the constraints of the site. However, the PR unreasonably minimizes its estimate of the potential consequences the considerable sight distance deficiencies at this location, dismissing them as likely to cause only minor rear-end collisions. In fact, at a 55 mile-per-hour speed, rear end collisions have the potential to be far worse than minor and in addition, losing sight of the road ahead can cause drivers to misjudge the alignment with more serious run-off-the-road and cross-centerline crashes as the result. In addition, the PR appears to have failed to assess the potential compounding effects of sight distance limitations on overlapping or closely spaced combinations of horizontal curves. More study of this issue is needed.

Patrick Creek Location 2

[2] Conventional highways with posted speed limits with posted speed limits at or below 40 miles-per-hour and curbs are exempt from clear recovery zone requirements. Since the posted speed limit is 55 and no curbs exist or are proposed, this exemption does not apply to the Ruby 1 segment.

The PR considered 3 alternatives at this location: replacing the existing bridge at an upstream location with corresponding roadway changes, replacing the existing bridge at a downstream location with corresponding roadway changes, or preserving the existing bridge with changes to the approach roadway alignments to increase curve radii, eliminating the need for large vehicles to cross the roadway centerline while entering and exiting the bridge. Subsequently, Caltrans has settled on the downstream bridge replacement as the preferred alternative. The alternative to preserve the existing bridge is dismissed, despite costing only two-thirds the cost of the replacement alternatives (roughly $6 million versus $9 million). The reason given is "functional obsolescence".[3] Since the primary element of functional obsolescence apparently is the need of large modern vehicles to cross the roadway centerline while getting on and off the bridge, a condition remedied by approach realignments in the 'preservation alternative', this dismissal is ridiculous. Although the present bridge lacks room for walkable and bikeable shoulders, this is not reasonable justification for dismissal through functional obsolescence, since much of the entire 197/199 route combination lacks walkable and bikeable shoulders.

Caltrans PR also failed to consider two other very low cost alternatives for preserving the existing bridge that are easily and quickly constructible and that would avoid the environmentally intrusive massive rock slope cuts needed to realign the approaches in the 'bridge preservation' alternative and that are also features of the upstream and downstream bridge replacement alternatives. The simplest would be to place signs on the immediate approaches to the bridge requiring traffic approaching the bridge to "Yield To Traffic On Bridge". In this way, there would be no conflict when large vehicles need to cross the centerline while entering or exiting the bridge. The other slightly more sophisticated way of maintaining the functionality of the existing bridge and approaches without massive approach reconstruction is to operate the bridge and its immediate approaches in reversible one-way operation controlled by traffic signals at each end. This latter alternative would also remedy the current lack of shoulders satisfactory for use by bikes and pedestrians, since, with the bridge essentially operating as a one-lane bridge, there would be adequate room for walkable/bikeable shoulders.

The Exceptions To Mandatory Design Standards Fact Sheet for the downstream bridge replacement alternative reveals that Caltrans currently preferred alternative would involve significant compromises to design standards. In an area where the posted speed limit is 55 miles-per-hour, the three approach curves, realigned at high costs with massive rock slope cuts, would only support speeds of 25, 32 and 32 miles-per-hour respectively and would have curve radii

[3] No evidence of structural deficiency is presented.

only 21.4%, 25% and 25% of the minimum mandatory curve radius for the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit. This large a disparity between the high speeds at which vehicles approach and the low design speeds supported by the substandard curve radii is a circumstance under which run off the road and centerline crossing hazardous incidents will continue to be prevalent.

Similarly, the compromises to mandatory minimum standards for curve radius, shoulder width and other separations from lateral obstructions result in 4 situations where the mandatory minimum 500 foot stopping sight distance to support the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit is not achieved, with available sight distance limited to respectively 131-, 177-,199- and 199-feet (26% to 40% of the mandatory minimum). These available sight distances support safe speeds of only 21, 26, 30 and 30 miles-per-hour respectively. The large disparity between the posted speed limit and the safe speeds that would be supported by available sight distance is a serious compromise to safety. This situation is compounded by portions of the road located within Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2 where stopping sight distance is also compromised below mandatory minimum by the proposed vertical alignment of the road. There are 4 such locations some of which are contiguous or overlapping to the locations where sight distance is also impaired by horizontal obstructions. Available sight distance at these locations are respectivel 300-, 442-, 330- and 370-feet, supporting safe speeds of 40, 50, 42 and 45 miles-per-hour (as contrast with the 500-feet minimum required for the 55 mile-per-hour speed limit).

Patrick Creek Location 3

Modifications proposed at Location 3 involve construction of a soldier pile retaining wall, eliminating an S-curve alignment and widening shoulders.
Although an S curve is eliminated, all of the 5 remaining curves in the segment continue to be substandard (less than the 1000-foot mandatory minimum for a 55 mile-per-hour design speed). The remaining curves have respective radii of 895-, 300-, 300- ,300- and 500-feet, supporting design speeds of 52, 30, 30, 30, and 38 miles per hour respectively. Hence, there remains a serious disparity between the safe speeds of the curves and the speed limit at 4 locations as identified in the Exceptions To Mandatory Design Standards Fact Sheet. However, the Fact Sheet fails to note that this creates substantial potential for motorists to over-drive the curve and that the proposed design is also in conflict with the principles of Alignment Consistency described in *Highway Design Manual* Topic 203.3. This topical section states:

> "*Sudden reductions in alignment standards should be avoided. Where physical restrictions on curve radius cannot be overcome and it becomes necessary to introduce curvature of lower standard than the design speed for the project, the design speed between successive curves should change not more than 10 miles per hour. Introduction of curves with lower design speeds*

should be avoided at the end of long tangents, steep downgrades , or at other locations where high approach speeds may be anticipated."

Clearly, the disparity between Curve 31 (52 mph) and Curve 32 (30 mph) is more than double the tolerable maximum and is a safety concern. A similar disparity exists in Patrick Creek Narrows Location 1 between Curve 12 (53 mph) and Curve 11 (31 mph).

The proposed Project leaves stopping sight distance below minimums at 4 locations, two due to lateral obstructions and two due to vertical alignment. The lateral obstructions limit available sight distance to that suitable to 28- and 30 miles per hour. The vertical alignment sight distance obstructions limit available sight distance to that safe for 40 and 47 miles-per-hour. The safe speeds at the horizontal obstruction areas particularly disparate from the 55 miles-per-hour posted speed limit for the area.

The Narrows

The deficiencies in the Project proposal for this segment have already been discussed extensively in this report and will not be reiterated here.

Washington Curve

This area of US 199 has a posted speed limit of 55 miles-per hour. Inexplicably, Caltrans has chosen to design the Project in this segment for a design speed of 40 miles per hour instead of the posted speed limit and the actual design fails to meet mandatory standards for even that reduced design speed. The existing Washington Curve is a broken back-curve comprised of a compound curve of 422- and 161-foot radii curves joined to a 1410 radius curve by a very short tangent. The proposed alignment changes the broken-back compound curve to 430- and 180-foot radii curves joined to a 1308-foot curve by an even shorter tangent. Minimum radius for 40 mile-per-hour design speed curves is 550 feet, substantially more than what is proposed.

Even at the 40 miles-per-hour design speed, the proposed curves are seriously deficient. The longer radius part of the compound curve hase as safe speed of 23 miles-per-hour, the shorter part has a safe speed of approximately 35 miles-per-hour. When compared to the posted speed limit of 55 miles-per hour (which would require a minimum 1000 foot radius curve), the proposed curve is clearly hazardous.

The PR's Exceptions To Mandatory Design Standards Fact Sheet reveals that the proposed design fails to meet the mandatory minimum stopping sight distance for the purported design speed of 40 miles-per-hour (300) feet but fails to disclose what the actual available sight distance would be. Clearly, the available sight distance

would be far below the mandatory minimum sight distance for traffic approaching at the signed speed limit of 55 miles-per-hour at this location (500 feet).

The PR Exceptions To Mandatory Design Standards Fact Sheet admits that even at the 40 miles-per-hour design speed, the proposed Project will not meet the mandatory minimum standards for stopping sight distance (300 feet), although it fails to disclose by how much. Clearly, the available stopping sight distance is vastly less than the 500 foot mandatory minimum for the posted speed limit of 55 miles-per-hour that should be the real design speed at this location. Although the Fact Sheet attempts to minimize the adverse safety consequences of the substandard design, the reality in this situation, as with other proposed situations in the Project where stopping sight distance is substandard, the fundamental fact is that if drivers cannot see far enough ahead on the road to stop safely, they are likely to run off it or hit something in it.

The proposed design would only provide 50% of the mandatory minimum shoulder width applicable to this segment. Given the other substandard design elements noted above, this would compound safety problems.

Cost Effective and Environmentally Sensitive Measures To Enhance Safety Without STAA Accommodation Are Possible

Caltrans could enhance the safety of the 197/199 route combination for the general motoring public without the high cost and environmental intrusion necessary to accommodate STAA trucks. Measures, some of which are currently included at some locations as minor features of the proposed Project, include:

- Open graded pavement surface at all locations,
- More prominent edge line and centerline delineation including raised reflective markers and centerline and edge line rumble strips,
- More extensive curve warning, and advisory speed signing
- Night lighting at selective locations,
- Transverse rumble strips in advance of the sharpest curves, most complex curve combinations, or ones with safe speeds at large differential from the approach roadway,
- Radar displays of vehicle speed,
- The previously mentioned signal-controlled, alternating one-way operation of the bridge at Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2 or the aforementioned "Yield To Traffic On Bridge" regulatory sign solution for the same location,
- Trucker-directed advisory signing such as is employed along the mountainous section of I-80 between the Nevada State Line and Auburn.

The PR should be redone to design and evaluate an alternative that is based on these principles.

Other Issues

Lack of Measured Speed Data

It is evident from Caltrans documentation that speed, particularly the differential between approach speed limits and the speeds that are safe at the "pinch points" addressed in the Project as well as the differential between speeds at which drivers attempt to drive through the "pinch points" and the safe speeds through those "pinch points" is a major causal factor in the crash experience documented in the PR. However, there is no evidence on record that Caltrans has ever considered the actual distribution of speeds driven at the pinch points and there approaches. This vital data should be collected and considered in determining whether the modifications proposed in the Project are adequate improvements for public safety, detrimental, or measures that solely provide a justification for shoe-horning STAA trucks onto the road.

Inconsistency of Traffic Volume, Truck Volume and Truck Percentage Data Between PR and Caltrans Posted Data

Data posted on the Caltrans Traffic Data Branch internet web site for US 199 northeast of the junction with SR 197, the location closest to the proposed Project work sites on US 199 indicate 2010 annual average daily traffic (AADT) of 4200, a truck percentage of 18.52 % of AADT and a truck volume of 778 AADT. Yet the PR analysis for the Project locations on US 199 uniformly assume the existing traffic volume is only 3000 AADT, the truck percentage is only 12% of AADT. In fact, the traffic and truck volumes that existed in 2010 on this area of US 199 already considerably exceed the PR's projected traffic and truck volumes for 2013, 2023 and 2033. Clearly, the PR has based its analysis of Project adequacy and critical design variables like Traffic Index (TI)[4] on seriously understated traffic and truck volumes on US 199.

Caltrans Traffic Data Branch posts traffic and truck volumes at two locations bracketing the Ruby 1 and Ruby 2 sites on SR 197. These show AADTs of 1800 vehicles and a truck percentage of 12.33% (222 trucks) to the northwest of the Ruby sites and 2300 vehicles and a truck percentage of 5.65% (130) trucks to the southeast. The average, since the Ruby sites lie between these count points is 2050 AADT and 176 trucks (truck percentage of 8.59). The PR baseline for the Ruby sites is only 1700 AADT and a truck percentage of only 8 percent (equivalent to only 136 trucks – 50 per day less than the above average. In fact, the PR's 2013 forecasts are below the 2010 values and its 2023 forecasts barely exceed them.

[4] This is a critical parameter used in determining the required structural strength and composition of the roadway surface based primarily on the expected numbers of heavy vehicle axel passages over the expected life of the pavement.

Again, the PR analysis appears to have relied on understated estimates of overall traffic and truck traffic both current and in the future. This is particularly disturbing since the section of US 199 between its junction with SR 197 and its junction with US 101 is reported to have carried an AADT of 719 trucks (15.63%). If the segment of SR 197 between US 199 and US 101 is improved as proposed in the Project, some of the truck traffic on the sinuous section of US 199 between its junctions with SR 197 and US 101 would likely shift to the improved SR 197, especially if Caltrans signs direct truck traffic that way. Caltrans analyses of Project truck traffic have made no evident attempt to estimate diversions of truck traffic from the westerly segment of US 199 to SR 197 that the Project would cause. This is a serious flaw in the analysis.

Improper Use of Accident Statistics

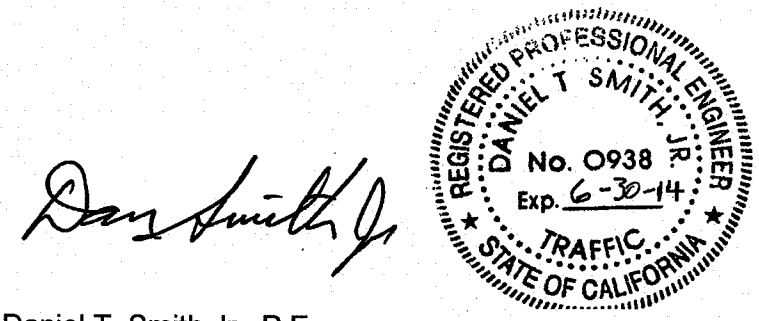
A well understood truism in highway safety analysis is the fact that curves are locations where some of the highest accident rates tend to occur. In the case of the PR, accident statistics are presented for short segments involving one or several curves. Accident rates at these locations are compared to the statewide average accident rate for 2-lane conventional highways in rural areas with similar terrain. This apples-to oranges comparison of accident rates for individual curve segments or short segments involving a multiple curve sequence to the overall statewide average for 2-lane conventional highways (which averages in many, many miles of tangent segments where few accidents normally occur) is a comparison that exaggerates the apparent deviation of crash rates on the subject route segments above that which is purportedly typical, thus exaggerating the need for some kind of improvement action based on safety. A fair comparison of crash rates on the subject segments to overall State Highway System 2-lane conventional highway crash rates in similar rural terrain on curves would present an unbiased depiction of the safety situation on the subject route segments and would doubtless show that the subject segments experience crash rates more typical of curve segments statewide.

Conclusion

Based on all of the points noted in detail above, we are convinced the Project Report's analysis and conclusions are inadequate and need to be revised. The Project's provisions are insufficient to authorize STAA trucks on the subject routes with reasonable safety to the public. Caltrans has failed to evaluate the safety impacts associated with the Project's exception to mandatory minimum design standards. An alternative that improves the operational safety characteristics of the route combination at modest cost and with minimal environmental intrusion is preferable to one that accommodates STAA trucks at significantly higher cost and environmental intrusion accompanied by detrimental effects on public safety.

Sincerely,

Smith Engineering & Management
A California Corporation



Daniel T. Smith Jr., P.E.

DANIEL T. SMITH, Jr.
President

EDUCATION

Bachelor of Science, Engineering and Applied Science, Yale University, 1967
Master of Science, Transportation Planning, University of California, Berkeley, 1968

PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION

California No. 21913 (Civil)
California No. 938 (Traffic)
Nevada No. 7969 (Civil)
Arizona No. 22131 (Civil)
Washington No. 29337 (Civil)

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Smith Engineering & Management, 1993 to present. President.
DKS Associates, 1979 to 1993. Founder, Vice President, Principal Transportation Engineer.
De Leuw, Cather & Company, 1968 to 1979. Senior Transportation Planner.
Personal specialties and project experience include:

Litigation Consulting. Provides consultation, investigations and expert witness testimony in highway design, transit design and traffic engineering matters including condemnations involving transportation access issues; traffic accidents involving highway design or traffic engineering factors; land use and development matters involving access and transportation impacts; parking and other traffic and transportation matters.

Urban Corridor Studies/Alternatives Analysis. Principal-in-charge for State Route (SR) 102 Feasibility Study, a 35-mile freeway alignment study north of Sacramento. Consultant on I-280 Interstate Transfer Concept Program, San Francisco, an AA/EIS for completion of I-280, demolition of Embarcadero freeway, substitute light rail and commuter rail projects. Principal-in-charge, SR 238 corridor freeway/expressway design/environmental study, Hayward (Calif.) Project manager, Sacramento Northeast Area multi-modal transportation corridor study. Transportation planner for I-80N West Terminal Study, and Harbor Drive Traffic Study, Portland, Oregon. Project manager for design of surface segment of Woodward Corridor LRT, Detroit, Michigan. Directed staff on I-80 National Strategic Corridor Study (Sacramento-San Francisco), US 101-Sonoma freeway operations study, SR 92 freeway operations study, I-880 freeway operations study, SR 152 alignment studies, Sacramento RTD light rail systems study, Tasman Corridor LRT AA/EIS, Fremont-Warm Springs BART extension plan/EIR, SRs 70/99 freeway alternatives study, and Richmond Parkway (SR 93) design study.

Area Transportation Plans. Principal-in charge for transportation element of City of Los Angeles General Plan Framework, shaping nations largest city two decades into 21'st century. Project manager for the transportation element of 300-acre Mission Bay development in downtown San Francisco. Mission Bay involves 7 million gsf office/commercial space, 8,500 dwelling units, and community facilities. Transportation features include relocation of commuter rail station; extension of MUNI-Metro LRT; a multi-modal terminal for LRT, commuter rail and local bus; removal of a quarter mile elevated freeway; replacement by new ramps and a boulevard; an internal roadway network overcoming constraints imposed by an internal tidal basin; freeway structures and rail facilities; and concept plans for 20,000 structured parking spaces. Principal-in-charge for circulation plan to accommodate 9 million gsf of office/commercial growth in downtown Bellevue (Wash.). Principal-in-charge for 64 acre, 2 million gsf multi-use complex for FMC adjacent to San Jose International Airport. Project manager for transportation element of Sacramento Capitol Area Plan for the state governmental complex, and for Downtown Sacramento Redevelopment Plan. Project manager for Napa (Calif.) General Plan Circulation Element and Downtown Riverfront Redevelopment Plan, on parking program for downtown Walnut Creek, on downtown transportation plan for San Mateo and redevelopment plan for downtown Mountain View (Calif.), for traffic circulation and safety plans for California cities of Davis, Pleasant Hill and Hayward, and for Salem, Oregon.

5311 Lowry Road, Union City, CA 94587 tel: 510.489.9477 fax: 510.489.9478

Transportation Centers. Project manager for Daly City Intermodal Study which developed a $7 million surface bus terminal, traffic access, parking and pedestrian circulation improvements at the Daly City BART station plus development of functional plans for a new BART station at Colma. Project manager for design of multi-modal terminal (commuter rail, light rail, bus) at Mission Bay, San Francisco. In Santa Clarita Long Range Transit Development Program, responsible for plan to relocate system's existing timed-transfer hub and development of three satellite transfer hubs. Performed airport ground transportation system evaluations for San Francisco International, Oakland International, Sea-Tac International, Oakland International, Los Angeles International, and San Diego Lindberg.

Campus Transportation. Campus transportation planning assignments for UC Davis, UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz and UC San Francisco Medical Center campuses; San Francisco State University; University of San Francisco; and the University of Alaska and others. Also developed master plans for institutional campuses including medical centers, headquarters complexes and research & development facilities.

Special Event Facilities. Evaluations and design studies for football/baseball stadiums, indoor sports arenas, horse and motor racing facilities, theme parks, fairgrounds and convention centers, ski complexes and destination resorts throughout western United States.

Parking. Parking programs and facilities for large area plans and individual sites including downtowns, special event facilities, university and institutional campuses and other large site developments; numerous parking feasibility and operations studies for parking structures and surface facilities; also, resident preferential parking .

Transportation System Management & Traffic Restraint. Project manager on FHWA program to develop techniques and guidelines for neighborhood street traffic limitation. Project manager for Berkeley, (Calif.), Neighborhood Traffic Study, pioneered application of traffic restraint techniques in the U.S. Developed residential traffic plans for Menlo Park, Santa Monica, Santa Cruz, Mill Valley, Oakland, Palo Alto, Piedmont, San Mateo County, Pasadena, Santa Ana and others. Participated in development of photo/radar speed enforcement device and experimented with speed humps. Co-author of Institute of Transportation Engineers reference publication on neighborhood traffic control.

Bicycle Facilities. Project manager to develop an FHWA manual for bicycle facility design and planning, on bikeway plans for Del Mar, (Calif.), the UC Davis and the City of Davis. Consultant to bikeway plans for Eugene, Oregon, Washington, D.C., Buffalo, New York, and Skokie, Illinois. Consultant to U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for development of hydraulically efficient, bicycle safe drainage inlets. Consultant on FHWA research on effective retrofits of undercrossing and overcrossing structures for bicyclists, pedestrians, and handicapped.

MEMBERSHIPS

Institute of Transportation Engineers Transportation Research Board

PUBLICATIONS AND AWARDS

Residential Street Design and Traffic Control, with W. Homburger *et al*. Prentice Hall, 1989.

Co-recipient, Progressive Architecture Citation, *Mission Bay Master Plan*, with I.M. Pei WRT Associated, 1984.

Residential Traffic Management, State of the Art Report, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1979.

Improving The Residential Street Environment, with Donald Appleyard et al., U.S. Department of Transportation, 1979.

Strategic Concepts in Residential Neighborhood Traffic Control, International Symposium on Traffic Control Systems, Berkeley, California, 1979.

Planning and Design of Bicycle Facilities: Pitfalls and New Directions, Transportation Research Board, Research Record 570, 1976.

Co-recipient, Progressive Architecture Award, *Livable Urban Streets, San Francisco Bay Area and London*, with Donald Appleyard, 1979.

5311 Lowry Road, Union City, CA 94587 tel: 510.489.9477 fax: 510.489.9478

1301 Northcrest Drive, Ste B PMB 16
Crescent City, California 95531
www.dnltc.org

Del Norte Local Transportation Commission

Tamera Leighton, Executive Director
Tamera@DNLTC.org
Desk: (707) 465-3878
Cell: (707) 218-6424

May 24, 2013

Barbara Boxer, U.S. Senator

Dianne Feinstein, US Senator

Jerry Brown Jr., Governor

Jared Huffman, U.S. Congressman

Wesley Chesbro, State Assemblymember

Jim Nielsen, State Senator

Re: 197/199 Safe STAA in Del Norte County

Dear Governor Brown and Representatives of Del Norte County,

The Del Norte Local Transportation Commission strongly supports the 197/199 Safe STAA projects in partnership with the California Department of Transportation; we request that the Commission in turn, also has your support in this effort. In 2006, this project was identified in a joint resolution of the County of Del Norte, City of Crescent City, Crescent City Harbor District, Del Norte County Unified School District, Tri-Agency Economic Development Authority, and the Crescent City/Del Norte County Chamber of Commerce: A Resolution in Support of Major Infrastructure Projects in Del Norte County. This joint resolution (enclosure) defining our regional needs has retained unanimous support since its inception. It is supported by every Del Norte region Native American Tribe.

This project is critical to improving regional goods movement and improving the overall safety of the highway. Removing the restriction of STAA trucks along SR 197/ US 199 corridor is consistent with existing federal and state legislation and our regional programs, plans and policies. STAA access to the SR 197/US 199 corridor is needed because this corridor serves as Del Norte County's only direct transportation link to the interstate highway system. The restrictions on STAA vehicles currently limit options for goods movement into and out of the region.

The Del Norte Local Transportation Commission has always understood this community initiative to be a call to action and has staunchly supported this project and

tirelessly worked in partnership with the Department of Transportation and the California Transportation Commission to deliver it as our highest transportation priority. Please understand that this project has the support of the vast majority of community members. The ongoing success of this much needed project is a reflection of setting regional priorities at the regional level, and consistently sustaining that support for the project from initiation to completion.

It is also important to note that our northern neighbor, the Curry County Board of Commissioners, has adopted a resolution in support of this project. Just 20 miles away, Brookings, Oregon is more so our sister community than are the miles distant California communities to the south, which have different regional needs. For our community's overall health and wellbeing, many have worked to advance this regional priority when it was originally programmed including:

- California State Senator, Sam Aanestad
- Alexandre EcoDairy Farm
- Brookings-Harbor Chamber of Commerce
- California Redwood Company
- California State Assemblymember, Patty Berg
- California Trucking Association
- Caltrans District 1
- City of Crescent City
- County of Del Norte
- Crescent City/Del Norte Chamber of Commerce
- Curry County Economic and Community Development Department
- Curry County Board of Commissioners
- Del Norte County Unified School District
- Elk Valley Rancheria
- Green Diamond Resource Company
- Hambro Forest Products
- Home Depot
- Lily Growers Association
- Mendocino Council of Governments
- Shasta County Regional Transportation Planning Agency
- Smith River Rancheria
- Tri-Agency Economic Development Corporation
- United States Congressman, Mike Thompson
- Yurok Tribe

Direct STAA access to Interstate 5 on the 197/199 corridor has been the top transportation priority in our region for over 14 years, and a regional priority by unanimous resolution since 2006.

Sincerely,

Richard Enea, Chair
Del Norte Local Transportation Commission

Cc: California Transportation Commission, California Department of Transportation
Enclosure: Resolution 2006-04

DEL NORTE COUNTY
RESOLUTION
2006-004

A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF MAJOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN DEL NORTE COUNTY

WHEREAS, Del Norte County is one of California's most remote yet important northern gateway counties, and whose economic viability depends on improved access; and

WHEREAS, Del Norte County's infrastructure is inadequate to meet the current and future population needs within the life of the proposed bond; and

WHEREAS, no significant highway improvements have occurred on Highway s 101 and 199 in more than thirty years; and

WHEREAS, maintaining our harbor is necessary for boating safety, economic prosperity, and the future growth of Del Norte County; and

WHEREAS, the Del Norte County Airport requires major renovation to meet current and future safety standards for regional aircraft; and

WHEREAS, Del Norte County High School, the area's only comprehensive high school, is almost 50 years old;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the following projects are a number one priority for funding in Del Norte County:

- Replacement of U.S. Hwy 101 at Last Chance Grade to maintain a physical connection to the rest of the State of California.
- Safety and mobility upgrades on State Hwy 197 and U.S. Hwy 199 to allow for STAA designation. Improvements along the "narrows" to maintain a vital trade and commerce link to Interstate 5.
- Dredging of the Crescent City Harbor every two years for the next ten years.
- Airport runway expansion to accommodate regional aircraft and the creation of an adequate terminal.
- Replacing Del Norte County High School with a new modern structure.

PASSED AND ADOPTED BY THE FOLLOWING GOVERNING BOARDS:

Sarah Sampels, Chair
Del Norte County
Board of Supervisors

Dennis Burns, Mayor
City of Crescent City

Mario Deiro, President
Crescent City Harbor District

Tom Cochran, President
Del Norte County Unified
School District

Mario Deiro, Chair
Tri-Agency

Chris Howard, President
Crescent City/Del Norte
Chamber of Commerce

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

Resolution for Future Consideration of Funding
02-DN-197, VAR, 02-DN-199, VAR
Resolution E-13-46

1.1 **WHEREAS,** the California Department of Transportation (Department) has completed an Environmental Impact Report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the CEQA Guidelines for the following project:

- State Route 197 (SR-197) and United States Route 199 (US-199) in Del Norte County. Roadway improvements at various locations on SR-197 and US-199 near the town of Patrick Creek. (PPNO 1047 and PPNO 1073)

1.2 **WHEREAS**, the Department has certified that the Environmental Impact Report has been completed pursuant to CEQA and the State CEQA Guidelines for its implementation; and

1.3 **WHEREAS**, the California Transportation Commission, as a responsible agency, has considered the information contained in the Final Environmental Impact Report.

1.4 **WHEREAS,** Findings were made by the Department pursuant to the State CEQA Guidelines; and

1.5 **WHEREAS,** the Department found that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment.

2.1 **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the California Transportation Commission does hereby support approval of the above referenced project to allow for consideration of funding.

June 6, 2013

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION FINDINGS FOR

197/199 SAFE STAA ACCESS PROJECT

SR 197 AND US 199 IN DEL NORTE COUNTY

RUBY 1, 01-DN-197-PM 4.5; RUBY 2, 01-DN-197-PM 3.2-4.0;

PATRICK CREEK NARROWS, 01-DN-199-PM 20.5-20.9, PM 23.92-24.08, & PM 25.55-25.65;

THE NARROWS, 01-DN-199-PM 22.7-23.0; WASHINGTON CURVE, 01-DN-199-PM 26.3-26.5

EA: 01-48110, 01-45490, 01-45000, 01-47940, 01-44830

The following information is presented to comply with State CEQA Guidelines (Title 14 California Code of Regulations, Chapter 3, Section 15901) and the Department of Transportation and California Transportation Commission Environmental Regulations (Title 21, California Code of Regulations, Chapter 11, Section 1501). Reference is made to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the project, which is the basic source for the information.

The following effects have been identified in the EIR as resulting from the project. Effects found not to be significant have not been included.

Animal Species and Threatened and Endangered Species

Salmonids – Fish

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential for significant effects under CEQA to the following fish species:

- Coho Salmon – Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast ESU (Federal Threatened, California Threatened, Essential Fish Habitat)
- Chinook Salmon – Southern Oregon/Northern California Coastal (Essential Fish Habitat)
- Coastal Cutthroat Trout (California Species of Concern, Forest Service Species of Concern)

The Draft EIR listed potential adverse impacts to fish species due to the potential for in-stream work to kill individual fish at the Patrick Creek Location 2, during bridge construction. The DEIR included measures to avoid and minimize impacts to less than significant levels. Changes and alterations in the project design and

construction have been incorporated into the project which avoid the significant environmental effect, as described in the Final EIR. The project design was modified to construct the bridge without work in the active channel, as well as providing other minimization and avoidance measures.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Department will avoid and minimize potential impacts on the salmonids and their Critical Habitat and EFH to the greatest extent practicable during project construction. Specific work windows and limitations on construction will be determined through consultations with resource agencies. To avoid, minimize, and offset impacts, the following measures will be included by the Department:

- Large woody debris obtained from tree removal in the project area will be made available to resource agencies for placement in nearby streams and rivers. This will have a positive effect on fish rearing habitat.
- All trees not taken by resource agencies or used by other government or private entities, with approval from the Department, will be put through a chipper and the chips will be applied to areas of exposed soil on-site as erosion control mulch.
- Sediment and erosion control measures will be implemented to minimize sediment discharge to the river or other waters.
- A vacuum sweeper will be used to clean the pavement.
- No material will be placed where it may enter the river due to precipitation.
- Noise blankets are being considered to help reduce the noise from blasting at the Narrows.
- If feasible during blasting activities at the Narrows, K-rail will be placed near the centerline, and a cyclone fence will be placed on top of that.
- No impact pile driving will be used for bridge work or retaining walls.
- There will be no instream activity in the Middle Fork Smith River.
- Debris resulting from bridgework at Patrick Creek Narrows Location 2 will be contained to the maximum extent practicable.

The Draft and Final EIR included compensatory mitigation for impacts to Coho Salmon (see below) for adverse impacts associated with in water work during the construction of the bridge at Patrick Creek Location 2. This measure is no longer required because design and construction methods were changed, thus avoiding the adverse impact. Temporary falsework, which provides support for the concrete bridge as it is being built is strong enough to support itself, would be constructed above the wetted channel but possibly within the high water mark. It would be removed at the end of each construction season, typically approximately October 15 or whenever environmental permits dictate. No permanent structures would be placed within the ordinary high-water mark of the Middle Fork Smith River.

Mitigation no longer required:

Implement Compensatory Mitigation for Coho Salmon—Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast ESU
Compensatory mitigation measures will be implemented in consultation with NMFS and DFG for impacts on coho salmon. To offset impacts on coho salmon from this project, fish passage at culverts on other watercourses in the Smith River watershed will be identified and the fish passage improved. This work may be done in advance of this project, concurrently, and/or afterwards.

These measures will reduce potential impacts to fish species to less than significant under CEQA.

Osprey (California Species of Concern)

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to disturb nesting Osprey.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Department will avoid and minimize potential impacts to nesting osprey by conducting surveys during the nesting season and consulting with the Department of Fish and Wildlife and the United States Forest Service if nesting osprey are detected within 0.5 miles of the project activities.

Migratory Birds (Migratory Bird Treaty Act)

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to impact nesting migratory birds through removal of active nesting in vegetation.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

The Department will avoid and minimize potential impacts to nesting birds by removing vegetation outside the breeding season. Grass, tree, and shrub removal will take place between September 1 and March 1 to avoid impacts to nesting birds. If vegetation must be removed outside these dates, a biological survey for nesting birds must be conducted prior to the vegetation removal.

Amphibians and Aquatic Organisms

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to impact amphibians and other aquatic organisms when working within waterways.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

Work involving seasonal creeks/drainages will take place when they are dry and there is no precipitation occurring or anticipated. Work in the water of perennially flowing channels will take place during the dry season, generally between June 15 and October 15, to minimize impacts on amphibians and other aquatic organisms.

Marbled Murrelet (Federal Threatened Species)
Northern Spotted Owl (Federal Threatened Species)

Adverse Environmental Effects:

The project has the potential to disturb nesting marbled murrelets and nesting northern spotted owls.

Findings:

Changes or alterations have been required in, or incorporated into, the project, which avoid or substantially lessen the significant environmental effect as identified in the final EIR.

Statement of Facts:

To avoid adverse effects to northern spotted owl during the critical breeding season (March 1–June 30), no night work will take place and there will be no blasting. To avoid potential noise impacts on migrating marbled murrelet between March 24 and September 15, there will be no construction activity (including blasting) in the morning for a 3-hour period, starting 1 hour before sunrise and lasting until 2 hours after sunrise. In the evening, no construction activity involving equipment with noise levels in excess of ambient traffic noise (including blasting) will occur in a 3-hour window beginning 2 hours before sunset and lasting until 1 hour after sunset. Therefore, from July 1 to September 15, there can be night work starting 1 hour after sunset and ending 1 hour before sunrise. After September 15 (until March 1), there will be no restrictions on night work. Final work windows will be determined through Section 7 consultation and may include additional restrictions or restrictions based upon noise levels and frequency.

Documents can be accessed at:
Environmental Management Branch E1
Caltrans District 1 Office
1656 Union Street
Eureka, CA 95501