



January 25, 2010

Mayor Helene Schneider
City of Santa Barbara
P.O. Box 1990
Santa Barbara, CA 93102-1990

Subject: Support for 101 HOV Widening Project

Dear Mayor Siminski:

The Santa Barbara County Association of Governments Board of Directors voted unanimously on January 21st to request that all local agencies support the 101 High Occupancy Vehicle lane widening project as Santa Barbara County's highest regional transportation priority for federal funding.

The 101 HOV widening project was presented to the public as the region's highest priority in the Measure A Investment Plan which was approved by nearly 80% of county voters in November 2008. Development of the Measure A Strategic Plan, which outlines how the projects promised to the voters in Measure A will be completed over the next 30 years, has underscored the critical need to obtain new sources of federal and state funding to construct the 101 HOV widening project. To the extent that we are successful in securing other outside discretionary funding such as federal earmarks, the delivery of the 101 project may be accelerated.

SBCAG has hired a federal lobbyist to assist the agency in obtaining federal funding. Our lobbyist has developed a legislative strategy to guide our federal advocacy efforts. The single most important aspect of the proposed legislative strategy is the need for all the local agencies in Santa Barbara County to have a united position regarding the 101 HOV Widening project as the region's highest transportation priority. Members of Congress and Senators receive numerous worthy project requests from their constituents. As they weigh these many requests for support, one of the major factors they will take into account is the extent and degree of support for the project from other entities in the region and the State.

Regional support for the 101 project could come in the form of letters or adopted resolutions from the cities and county. For maximum impact, however, local jurisdictions should also submit the project as part of their 2010 federal legislative agendas and indicate specifically that it is their highest regional transportation priority. They should also discuss the project as part of their federal legislative agenda when they meet with members of our Congressional delegation. Identifying the 101 HOV Widening Project as the highest regional priority does not preclude local agencies from seeking earmark funding for local priorities.

ATTACHMENT

A delegation of SBCAG board members will be meeting in Washington, D.C. with our congressional representatives, committee staff and Department of Transportation staff to communicate our priorities. These meetings are scheduled for Feb 10-12 and, if possible we would like to have your city council act on this request prior to these meetings so that we can demonstrate the countywide support for the 101 HOV project in our region.

U.S. 101 is one of only two north-south interregional highways between Los Angeles and San Francisco. When Interstate 5 is closed because of accidents, fires, snow, or other inclement weather, all north-south traffic in California is diverted to the 101 freeway. It is the primary artery along the Central Coast and is vital to statewide commerce; this is reflected by its designation as a state Focus Route and High Emphasis Route. The corridor is a principal arterial on the National Highway System. It serves as a Strategic Highway Network Route, as well as a State Highway Extra Legal Load Route and is part of the National Truck Network. The corridor provides access from California's Central Coast agricultural operations to markets around the country.

The 101 HOV widening project provides numerous benefits including increased capacity for reduced congestion and interregional goods movement, improved safety and multi-modal access and jobs creation. The freeway widening will help protect the economic viability of the entire region by reducing travel delays.

SBCAG respectfully requests that the City of Guadalupe approve a resolution supporting the 101 HOV widening project as Santa Barbara County's highest regional transportation priority for federal funding. Attached is a sample resolution that you may wish to use. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions about this important project.

Sincerely,



Salud Carbajal
SBCAG Chair

Attachment