

April 13, 2004

Harvey Heaton, FSP Program Manager
California Highway Patrol
444 North 3rd Street, Suite 310
Sacramento, CA 95814-0227

RE: New Local Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) Programs In the Statewide Tier I
FSP Program

Dear Mr. Heaton:

The Freeway Service Patrol (FSP) has been a great benefit to Santa Cruz County motorists for ten years. Everyone in the State deserves the benefits of decreased congestion, decreased gasoline consumption, improved safety, improved air quality, etc. produced by the FSP. Therefore, we support the addition of local FSP programs even in difficult economic times when new State funds cannot be added to the program and support changes to the FSP Statewide Guidelines for the inclusion of these new programs.

We appreciate the excellent work of the Statewide FSP Oversight Committee in drafting sound FSP guidelines, improving FSP statutes and increasing State FSP funding. Like other members of the Statewide FSP Oversight Committee, we always support and encourage increasing the amount of available State FSP funds to add new local FSP programs and to expand existing ones. However, it is for the elected State legislature and the Governor to decide where existing tax dollars going to the State are spent and who gets those tax dollars unless that authority is delegated to another body through the legislative process or by the voters. The authority to prevent qualifying agencies from obtaining State FSP funds has not been delegated to the Statewide FSP Oversight Committee.

The motorists in the jurisdiction of the San Bernardino Associated Governments (SANBAG) and other areas have as great a need for FSP services and as much right to the State FSP funds as do the residents in the respective jurisdictions of the existing FSP programs. The San Bernardino County area has been suffering from severe congestion since before the Freeway Service Patrol Act was enacted in 1992 and could have initiated an FSP program at that time. SANBAG and its region's legislators could argue that San Bernardino County residents have been subsidizing the existing FSP programs for 12 years by not requesting their share of the State FSP funds until now. We have no doubt that SANBAG's legislative effort to access its legitimate share of State FSP funds would be successful, a process which could result in negative consequences for the State FSP program and for individual FSP programs. Our collective efforts would prove more fruitful if we maintain our focus on increasing State FSP funds in the long run protecting our individual share of State FSP funds in the short run.

The Statewide FSP Oversight Committee has been doing a good job in highlighting the need for additional funds as new FSP programs are formed and it is reasonable to expect that State FSP funds will eventually be increased to add new FSP programs. In fact, because the FSP program has been proven to have such a high benefit/cost ratio, it is reasonable to expect additional State FSP funds in the future. The Statewide FSP Oversight Committee must continuously work to increase those funds. However, attempting to deny State FSP funds to areas that legitimately qualify for those funds is not a positive strategy. A better strategy would be to bring new programs into the FSP family and have an even stronger case for increased funding when the current state budget crisis subsides.

Therefore, we urge the Statewide FSP Oversight Committee to modify the FSP Statewide Guidelines to allow new FSP programs to access existing State FSP funding while maintaining strong language to increase the level of State FSP funds and prevent a legislative effort that could be detrimental to all our FSP programs.

Thank you very much for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (831) 460-3200 or Luis Mendez, FSP Program Manager, at (831) 460-3212.

Sincerely,

Linda Wilshusen
Executive Director

\\\\Rtcserv1\Shared\CORRESP-Outgoing\2004\0404\FSPNewPrograms.doc

Cc: Robert Copp, Chief, Office of System Management, Caltrans Headquarters
Barbara Goodwin, Executive Director, Council of Fresno County Governments
Roger Snoble, Chief Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Authority
Steve Heminger, Executive Director, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
Arthur T. Leahy, Chief Executive Officer, Orange County Transportation Authority
Eric A. Haley, Executive Director, Riverside County Transportation Commission
Gary L. Gallegos, Executive Director, San Diego Association of Governments
Julia E. Green, Executive Director, San Joaquin Council of Governments
Brian Williams, Executive Director, Sacramento Transportation Authority
William Reichmuth, Executive Director, Transportation Agency for Monterey County
Norm King, Executive Director, San Bernardino Associated Governments
Jim Kemp, Executive Director, Santa Barbara County Association of Governments
Celia McAdam, Executive Director, Placer County Transportation Planning Agency