



Attachment 2
County of Santa Cruz

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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FOURTH DISTRICT**MARK W. STONE**
FIFTH DISTRICT

June 6, 2005

Randy Johnson, Vice Chair
Santa Cruz County Regional
Transportation Commission
c/o 1 Civic Center Drive
Scotts Valley, CA 95066


RE: EXTENSION OF MERGE LANES PROJECT TO SOQUEL AVENUE EXIT

Dear Randy:

Enclosed with this letter is a copy of the letter that I sent to Congress Member Farr recently. Since this letter was discussed by several members of the public at our last Commission meeting, I think that Commission members should have a copy as well.

Please feel free to give me a call if you have any questions or would like any other information.

Very truly yours,


ELLEN PIRIE, Supervisor
Second DistrictEP:lg
Enclosure

cc: SCCRTC

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May 16, 2005

Congress Member Sam Farr
701 Ocean Street, Room 318
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

**RE: PROJECT TO CONTINUE MERGE LANE ON HIGHWAY 1 FROM
LA FONDA STREET TO SOQUEL AVENUE OFF-RAMP**

Dear Congress Member Farr:

I am writing to you to ask for your continued support of the RTC/Caltrans project which will extend the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane Project to the off-ramp at Soquel Avenue. It is my understanding that you are seeking \$3.1 million to assist us with this new piece of the project. Please allow me to give you a little bit of background about that project which will help you understand why I am writing.

When I came onto the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors, the Highway 1/17 Merge Lane Project was well underway. Frankly, I didn't pay a lot of attention to it since the design had been completed and the funding committed before I was on the Commission. After I became a member of the RTC I saw a diagram of the proposed project on the southbound side of Highway 1. I was very surprised to see that the plan calls for the highway to go from four lanes to two lanes in a space of about 1/8 of a mile. This is a bad design that, in my opinion, is not safe. I believe that this lane configuration will force drivers to abruptly slow down and will turn the freeway into a parking lot. In addition, I'm afraid that there will be many accidents.

Fortunately, Caltrans agreed that this was going to be a problem and created an additional project that will continue the merge lane to the Soquel Drive off-ramp, a distance of another 1/8 - 1/4 of a mile. Since many vehicles exit at the Soquel Drive off-ramp, that should work pretty well.

Caltrans has replicated that design on the northbound side as well. They believe that it is equally important, although I fail to see that based on my many daily trips on Highway 1.

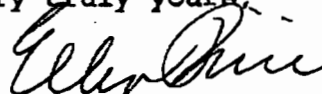
May 16, 2005

Page 2

I am writing to you because I have recently become aware that Micah Posner of an organization called People Power is organizing a campaign against this improvement. Mr. Posner says that he believes that this is a "sneak" widening of Highway 1 and has written a letter in a number of newspapers including the local Sierra Club Newsletter. I am enclosing a copy of that letter. Mr. Posner has made no effort to gather the facts and, in fact, is misrepresenting the project. Mr. Posner is gathering signatures and initiating a letter writing campaign. I know that you are sensitive to community concerns and I wanted to let you know that you may be receiving these letters, petitions, and such. I hope that you will continue to support this important safety project for your constituents.

Thank you for all your efforts on our behalf.

Very truly yours,



ELLEN PIRIE, Supervisor
Second District

EP:lg
Enclosure

2115C2

shopping, that would be California's First Vehicle-Free Community, some listeners looked aghast.

Isn't it time we breathe less aircraft and vehicle toxic emissions, hear less motor noise, surround ourselves with floral beauty and pesticide-free flowers, fruits and veggies? Isn't it time to build bike and pedestrian pathways rather than more airport runways?

—Gary Harrold
Aptos

Editor's Note:

At the present time, the Sierra Club does not have a position regarding the Watsonville airport. However, we would like to point out that the Watsonville airport is home to an extensive population of federally endangered Santa Cruz tarplant. The existence of this endemic plant has stopped airport expansion in the past. While the vision of a model organic agricultural research center is indeed attractive, it is not clear if such a facility could be built at the airport site without harming this endangered species.

Sneak widening

In November, 2004, 56% of Santa Cruz County voters voted AGAINST Measure J, the transportation sales tax ballot measure that featured widening Highway 1 from Santa Cruz to Aptos. The Sierra Club participated in the campaign against the measure because widening Highway 1 would increase air pollution, encourage suburban sprawl, and have little to no effect on automobile congestion. The measure was soundly rejected; it needed a 2/3 vote to pass.

Despite the defeat of highway widening in the election, the Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) continues to push to widen the highway. In fact, widening Highway 1 continues to be their top priority. The latest plan is to add a lane in each direction between Soquel and Morrissey Avenues in Santa Cruz at a cost of over \$10 million.

The Commission has asked U.S. Congressman Sam Farr to submit a federal earmark request to construct this project. Representative Farr has agreed on the condition that the RTC demonstrates public support for the project.

Please contact Sam Farr's Office and tell him that you do not support the Highway 1 Soquel/Morrissey Merge Lanes Project.

—Micah Posner
Santa Cruz

"camping, nature study, hiking and associated activities," yet riding a bicycle on the same road and to the same parking lot is not consistent with the deed restrictions?

—Mark Nockleby
Santa Cruz

Rethink bike ban

As a Club member, I am disappointed that our Chapter has worked actively to pro-

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