

~ WINEMAKING AT A HIGHER LEVEL ~

June 23, 2010

El Dorado County
Department of Transportation
Dustin Harrington
4504 Golden Foothill Parkway
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

RECEIVED
JUN 28 2010
DOT EDH

Dear Mr. Harrington,

I am writing this letter on behalf of the El Dorado Winery Association (EDWA) to convey our serious concerns regarding the planned closure of the Bucks Bar bridge.

EDWA supports the replacement of the bridge and applaud your department's efforts. However, our association strongly opposes the full removal resulting in the closure of Bucks Bar Road for a 6 month construction season. The impact of this planned closure will be severe and long-lasting to the health of our family-owned businesses.

We support the Fairplay Winery Association suggestion for the **partial** closure of Bucks Bar Road to leave the bridge intact. The critical business time is Friday through Sunday along with holidays and road construction typically occurs during Monday – Friday. Please consider and evaluate leaving the bridge intact, shutting the road from Monday to Thursday for construction and reopen the bridge for the weekend and holiday traffic. It seems the bridge could be completed within one construction season and tourism and agricultural activities would be reduced, but not eliminated.

Please consider our request during the public discussion phase and support our efforts to maintain a viable business environment in El Dorado County.

Sincerely,

Beth Goodlin-Jones
President, El Dorado Winery Association
Lava Cap Winery

CC: Stefan Tscheppe, President, Fairplay Winery Association
Jim Ware – DOT - Director
Matt Smeltzer – DOT - Director of Roadway Design
Ray Nutting – Board of Supervisors – District 2
John Knight – Board of Supervisors – District 1
Jack Sweeney – Board of Supervisors – District 3
Kathryn Mathews – Executive Director - EDCTC





July 10, 2010

El Dorado County
Department of Transportation
Dustin Harrington
4504 Golden Foothill Parkway
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762

RECEIVED

JUL 14 2010

DOT EDH

Dear Mr. Harrington,

Please accept this letter as the formal response from the Fair Play Winery Association (FPWA) to the proposed replacement of the Bucks bar bridge. We are also requesting a formal response to this letter.

The FPWA supports the replacement of the bridge, but vehemently opposes to the full removal resulting in the closure of Bucks Bar Road for a 6 month construction season. The repercussions of the closure will not be fully understood until the project is launched and are unlikely to be reasonably mitigated.

The impacts to our small businesses and our local economy are as follows:

1. Tasting room surveys results show that over 50% of our visitor traffic comes to our region via Bucks Bar Road. Clearly, it is the gateway corridor to Fair Play. The savviest of visitors will find their way to our wineries, but may choose to take an entirely different approach such as driving through, spending money and staying in Amador County along the way.
2. Many of our visitors drive in from areas outside our county. A road closure and extensive detour in an unfamiliar area will dissuade some visitors from continuing on to Fair Play or from making a return trip until construction is completed. Just look at the experiences of Apple Hill with business dropping by 75% when US50 was closed because of fires and landslides. People thought they could not get there.
3. There is a cumulative effect of road construction on visitors. Between Fair Play and US50 at Missouri Flat, there is continuing overpass construction, the Diamond Springs Parkway construction, turn lane construction at Oak Hill and Pleasant Valley and now the bridge replacement all on the schedule. This is a significant number of obstacles to experience on your way to visit Fair Play for a relaxing day in the country. Local traffic is different than tourism traffic.

4. Like all small businesses in this economy, we are grinding through the economic slowdown. We all certainly believe and hope that this unprecedented downturn is turned to an upswing by the construction window. The timing of the construction means we will have barely started to recover from one economic rib shot before taking on another. A loss of \$500,000 in total direct sales at the wineries with economic escalators represents a loss of about \$4,000,000 in agritourism spending to the south county area and El Dorado County over the 6 month window.

Our collective concerns to relating to full closure of Bucks Bar Road and removal of the bridge are weekend traffic patterns and construction delays. Weekends are prime time for our businesses with individual marketing events, the Fair Play Wine Festival, creating wine tasting experiences and capturing direct sales dollars. Once the bridge is out there is no turning back. Any unexpected delays or challenges that could extend construction window would be devastating to our businesses.

A possible approach not considered as an alternative in the feasibility study is the partial closure of Bucks Bar Road and leaving the bridge intact. Our prime business time is Friday – Sunday along with holidays and road construction typically occurs during Monday – Friday. Please consider and evaluate leaving the bridge intact, shutting the road from Monday – Thursday for construction and reopen the bridge for the weekend and holiday traffic. It seems the bridge could be completed within in one construction season and agritourism traffic impacts would be reduced, but not eliminated.

We look forward to hearing from you in the near future and having the opportunity to discuss this further in the public hearing process.

Best regards,

Stefan Tscheppe
President



CC: Jim Ware – DOT - Director
Matt Smeltzer – DOT - Director of Roadway Design
Ray Nutting – Board of Supervisors – District 2
John Knight – Board of Supervisors – District 1
Jack Sweeney – Board of Supervisors – District 3
Kathryn Mathews – Executive Director - EDCTC

Fair Play Winery Association, PO Box 341, Fair Play, CA 95684, info@fairplaywine.com



AGRICULTURAL COMMISSION

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eldcag@edcgov.us

Greg Boeger, Chair - Agricultural Processing Industry
Lloyd Walker, Vice-chair - Other Agricultural Interests
Chuck Bacchi - Livestock Industry
Bill Draper, Forestry /Related Industries
Ron Mansfield - Fruit and Nut Farming Industry
Tim Neilsen - Livestock Industry
John Smith - Fruit and Nut Farming Industry

MEMORANDUM

Copy to Matt

DATE: April 27, 2011
TO: Jim Ware, Department of Transportation
FROM: Greg Boeger, Chair *GB*
SUBJECT: BUCKS BAR BRIDGE CLOSURE

During the Agricultural Commission's regularly scheduled meeting held on April 13, 2011 the following discussion and motion occurred regarding the Bucks Bar Bridge Closure.

Commission member, John Smith, offered to recues himself from this item as he is an owner of a winery in the Fair Play/Somerset area and the project will have an impact on him personally.

Chair Boeger and the Commission suggested that as the project will not have just an affect on his business alone, he should hear the item in the capacity as an Ag Commission member.

Matt Smeltzer, P.E., Department of Transportation, provided information to the Commission regarding the Bucks Bar Bridge rehabilitation project. This project entails the replacement of the existing bridge at the North Fork Cosumnes River, in addition to widening and minor realignment of Bucks Bar Road approaching the bridge. Three alternative plans have been offered by DOT staff. As the closure may have severe impact on the wineries, farms, businesses and the employees of such, several people spoke of their support for alternative plan #3 which would minimize the road closure. It was suggested, that all concerned, should become pro-active before any construction begins on this project. A winery owner suggested the installation of billboards and/or signage on every major roadway into the south county, advertising the many agricultural attractions this area offers to tourists.

There was discussion of the three alternative plans as presented by Mr. Smeltzer. After consideration of the numerous public comments in support of Plans 2 or 3 over Plan 1, the Commission agreed that Plan 3 would be a better approach and in the best interest of the agricultural businesses in the South County.

It was moved by Mr. Bacchi and seconded by Mr. Walker to recommend to the Department of Transportation and the El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, the Agricultural Commission's support of DOT Alternative Plan #3, as it will have a less severe impact to

Jim Ware
Meeting Date: April 13, 2011
RE: Bucks Bar Bridge Closure
Page 2

agricultural businesses in the Fair Play/Somerset/Mt.Aukum area. The Commission also recommends leaving the current Bucks Bar Bridge intact for the historical value it adds to the county.

Motion passed.

AYES: Bacchi, Draper, Walker, Neilsen, Boeger
NOES: None
ABSTAIN: Smith
ABSENT: Mansfield

If you have any questions regarding the Agricultural Commission's actions, please contact the Agriculture Department at (530) 621-5520.

GB:na

Ray Nutting, EDC Supervisor (District 2)

PC 6/9/11
10



June 2, 2011

El Dorado County Planning Commission

re. Bucks Bar Bridge Replacement

The El Dorado County Department of Transportation is proposing a much needed replacement of the one lane bridge on Bucks Bar Road known as the Bucks Bar bridge. In their design study they have proposed three alternatives. Alternative 1 removes the existing bridge and then replaces it with a new 2 lane bridge; this seems to be the alternative that is being preferred by DOT. This alternative completely closes Bucks Bar Road for a period of one year.

The Fair Play Winery Association, as one the principle groups of businesses in the affected South County area, strongly opposes alternative one. The closure to Bucks Bar Road will have a dramatic negative impact on the customer flow to our wineries as well as on the daily commute of the local residents.

After much study and discussion we believe that this disruption of traffic flow to our business could result in as much as a 25% reduction in the revenue from our tasting room sales. This loss would be on top of the 25 to 50% loss of business we have suffered due to the economic down turn. The wineries are struggling to recover from this loss and cannot stand any further loss of business.

A 25% reduction would amount to a loss of \$1,750,000 in revenue. When the economic escalator factor used in the County's General Plan, is applied, the loss to the county's economy would be \$14,000,000. The resulting loss in the county's share of sales tax would be \$140,000.

It is felt that a 25% reduction in sales would result in an average loss of one employee per winery. This would amount to additional economic loss of \$560,000. When the economic escalation factor is applied the impact to the counties business would be \$4,480,000 and a loss of county sales tax of \$44,800.



THE WINERIES OF
FAIR PLAY

wines with an altitude

Alternative 1 could have an economic impact of \$18,480,000 and a county sales tax loss of \$184,800 in sales tax. This loss is directly associated with the wineries loss of business. It does not address the loss of business of other local business such as the Bed and Breakfasts, restaurants, Christmas tree farms, and other businesses.

Due to the nature of a tasting room customer once you lose a customer it takes several years to replace that customer. The result is that the loss of revenue will not end in one year, but will continue for several years.


In addition to the business loss, there is a significant economic impact to the residents of the south county area that uses Bucks Bar Road daily. DOT tells us that 5114 trips enter Buck Bar Bridge daily. Using a 90% factor, 4603 of those cross the bridge and will have to use the Pleasant Valley alternative. This alternative is 3.5 miles longer, resulting in almost six million additional miles that will be driven in the one year the bridge is closed. Using the conservative IRS factor of \$.50 per mile for gas, maintenance, and depreciation of the vehicles being driven means the residents will have an economic impact of almost \$3,000,000.

Clearly, DOT's Alternative 1 is extremely impacting on both the businesses and residents of the south county area. This alternative needs to be withdrawn from additional consideration.

Alternative 2 proposes building a new one lane bridge in construction season one then removing the old bridge and building the second new lane in construction season two. This alternative drags out construction too long and is not favored by us as well.

Alternative 3 builds the new two lane bridge and then removes the old bridge. This is accomplished in one construction season, straightens the road, and avoids the ominous economic impact of alternative one. This is the most practical alternative and the one that we recommend be adopted as the preferred approach to replacing the existing bridge. We encourage the Planning Commission to adopt alternative 3 as their recommendation to the Board of Supervisors.

Respectfully,



Jim Brown
for the Fair Play Winery Association



**EL DORADO COUNTY
FARM BUREAU**

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June 30, 2011

El Dorado County Department of Transportation
2850 Fairlane Court
Placerville, CA 95667

Attention: Matt Smeltzer, Deputy Director

Subject: Bucks Bar Road at the North Fork Cosumnes River – Bridge Rehabilitation
CIP Project No. 77116

Dear Mr. Smeltzer,

The El Dorado County Farm Bureau supports the development and maintenance of roads, bridges, and other public projects. It is clearly in agriculture's interest to have adequate infrastructure but the effect of major infrastructure projects must also look at the unique characteristics and needs of the rural business community before they begin.

An important agricultural area near the proposed project is the Fair Play American Viticultural Area which is part of the Fair Play/Somerset Agricultural District. Our agriculturists rely heavily on on-site sales and the limited roads in the area are their main connection to the consumers who buy their products. Bucks Bar Road is a main connecting road that directs the traveler from Highway 50 to the South County. The roads are heavily travelled to accommodate those visitors during events and peak sale times. A high volume of customers is essential to the success of the wineries and the related agritourism industry and traffic disruptions during this period will adversely impact that volume.

The proposed staff-preferred alternative would include a total closure of Bucks Bar Road for "a season or so". This is the same season, when the weather is warm and dry enough to work on construction projects, that is the "tourism season" our businesses rely upon. During construction of the replacement bridge a total road closure would certainly have a negative impact on the businesses that rely on visitors to the region.

The Farm Bureau represents more than 1200 member families, many of whom manage small family farming and ranching operations in the Fair Play region. We are concerned about the effect that the Bucks Bar Bridge replacement project would have on our members. The impacts to the businesses that serve the rural communities must be adequately considered and we believe that, thus far, inadequate analysis has been completed to identify those impacts and their proposed solutions.

The Farm Bureau Board of Directors believes that the impacts to the businesses during any required road closures must be minimized to the maximum extent possible. A total closure

*Protect, promote, and enhance the economic opportunities and long-term viability
for El Dorado County farmers, ranchers, and foresters.*

instead of directed traffic controls would have a deleterious impact to the rural businesses in the south county. The businesses that would be affected by a lengthy road closure include:

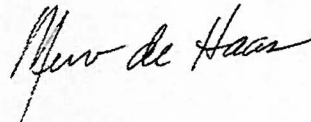
- agricultural businesses such as vineyards, orchards, flowers, Christmas Trees, and livestock operations;
- agricultural support services such as feed stores, equipment repair and value-added processing;
- agricultural commercial outlets such as wine and olive oil tasting rooms; and,
- visitor serving businesses such as restaurants, bed & breakfast inns, and vacation rentals.

Additionally there are businesses that serve the needs of the local residents such as convenience stores, restaurants, and gasoline service that would be negatively impacted by the loss of business from travelers who do not visit the area during the road closure. They would also be severely affected if the agricultural operations failed to stay in business.

The main concern for these businesses is not just the "season" of the closure, but for the many years it will take for the visitors to reconnect to those businesses. The market base of the small business, once lost, may not be re-established for many years. These businesses contribute to the county's property tax base, sales taxes, transient occupancy tax, and provide a jobs/housing balance to the local employees and residents of the county. They also provide, through employment, purchasing power that has a cumulative benefit to the surrounding community.

For these reasons, the Farm Bureau considers the preferred alternative to be too onerous and recommends the county pursue one of the other proposals that would allow for controlled traffic during construction of the new bridge rather than a total road closure.

Sincerely,



Merv de Haas
Executive Director

cc: Ray Nutting, Chairman, El Dorado County Board of Supervisors, District 2
John Knight, County Supervisor, District 1
Jack Sweeney, County Supervisor, District 3
Ron Briggs, County Supervisor, District 4
Norma Santiago, County Supervisor, District 5