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April 9, 2015
Amarjeet S. Benipal, Director
California Department of Transportation, District 3
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901-0911

Dear Mr. Benipal,

I am writing to you on behalf of the County of El Dorado (County). The intent of this letter is to discuss the Echo Summit Bridge replacement/rehabilitation project scheduled for construction in 2019. First we wish to express our sincere appreciation to Clark Peri for the presentations he gave to the Board of Supervisors for the County of El Dorado (Board) and the El Dorado County Transportation Commission. In addition, we wish to thank Caltrans for the wide range of public involvement you are generating well in advance of this project.

Second, although it is very early in the process and we understand that Caltrans will select alternatives following environmental review, the Board believes it is important to share our concerns over several of the alternatives as early as possible to promote a collaborative effort on this project.

During the presentation five alternatives were presented as identified below:

- Alternative 1A
 - Replace with 26 foot wide bridge
 - Total 120-150 days in one construction season
 - 60-90 days under full closure and 10-30 days under one-way traffic control
 - Estimated Cost: \$5,200,000

- Alternative 1B:
 - Replace with 26 foot wide bridge
 - Total 100-130 days in two construction seasons
 - 20-50 days under full closure and 50-70 days under one-way traffic control
 - Estimated Cost: \$5,200,000

- Alternative 2A:
 - Replace with 30.75 foot wide bridge
 - Total 200-230 days in two construction seasons under one-way traffic control (8-hour work shifts)
 - Estimated Cost: \$5,200,000

- Alternative 2B:
 - Replace with 30.75 foot wide bridge
 - Total 160-190 days in two construction seasons under one-way traffic control (10-hour work shifts)
 - Estimated Cost: \$5,300,000

- Alternative 3:
 - Rehabilitate existing bridge
 - Total 150-180 days in two construction seasons
 - 20-50 days under full closure and 90-120 days under one-way traffic control
 - Estimated Cost: \$6,100,000

- Alternative 4:
 - No Build

Alternatives 1A, 1B and 3 require the closure of US 50 to all traffic for an amount of time ranging from 1 to 3 months. During that time, traffic will be detoured on differing routes depending upon its origin. It is proposed that if the traveler starts in central Sacramento County or further west they will be detoured along State Route (SR) 16 to SR 49 to SR 88 to SR 89 rejoining US 50 in Meyers just south of Lake Tahoe (adding roughly 53 minutes to a travelers commute each way according to MapQuest, versus simply traversing Highway 50). If the traveler starts to the east of Sacramento they will be diverted in Placerville along SR 49 to SR 88 to SR 89 and as before, rejoining US 50 in Meyers (adding roughly 1 hour and 20 minutes to a travelers commute each way according to MapQuest, versus simply traversing Highway 50).

Alternative 4 might have the same results as the above alternatives but in a more dramatic manner. If the bridge is not reconstructed/rehabilitated then it may eventually be subject to a catastrophic failure that would close US 50 for a longer period than any of the above alternatives.

The County believes that closing US 50 for any period of time will have a significant, long lasting effect upon the economy of not only the south end of the Tahoe Basin, but to the many business and towns that stretch along the US 50 corridor from the west El Dorado County line to the bridge itself. Although the effect will be felt most significantly during the closure, it will have a lasting negative effect on the region. Because of the difficulty and time required to travel either of the US 50 detours the traveling public may decide to switch their destination from the south end of the lake to the north or some other tourist area. If a tourist

has done this once they may decide to make this switch permanently. When this happens, the negative economic effect throughout the region will become long lasting.

The County understands that to rebuild the bridge without a total closure requires the use of one way traffic controls and although the road isn't closed there will be long traffic backups during the high summer tourism periods. These backups may still cause the traveling public to switch their destination with a rippling negative economic effect as previously identified.

For these reasons the Board encourages Caltrans to choose Alternative 2B. The reason the Board is recommending the use of 2B over 2A parallels the reasoning given above. The Board is asking Caltrans to keep the amount of days that Highway 50 travelers are subjected to one way traffic controls to a minimum. Caltrans is an expert on minimizing traffic impacts on commuters related to lane closure; however the Board has seen the benefits of other mechanisms such as of the use of extended hours for the contractor to work (Alternative 2B, 10-hour shifts) including the possible use of night work and incentives for early project completion that can aide in minimizing traffic impacts related to lane closures as well.

The Board agrees with Caltrans that updating this bridge is critical to the prosperity of El Dorado County. We believe that Caltrans is doing a wonderful job seeking early and wide reaching public input on this project. Maintaining and enhancing our partnership with Caltrans is very important and this is a major reason we are sending these suggestions early in the replacement timeline and ask that you continue to engage the public, elected officials and our staff, in this process.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me or County staff if you have any questions or wish to continue this dialogue.

Sincerely,

Brian K. Veerkamp, Chair
County of El Dorado, Board of Supervisors