

Memorandum

To: Chair and Commissioners

Date: February 7, 2002

From: Diane C. Eidam

File:
Reference Number 5.2
Information

Ref.: UPDATE ON STATUS OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS FOR TRI-COUNTY PROJECTS

This is an information item to allow the three Counties - Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, the Department, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to update the Commission on progress toward environmental documentation for the SR 49 Bypass Project. This is a follow-up to last months information item.

February 13, 2002

Diane Eidam
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Amador 49 Bypass
Environmental Clearance

Dear Ms. Eidam:

On behalf of the Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC) and the Tri-County partnership, I want to thank you and the California Transportation Commission for once again focusing your attention and support on the Amador 49 Bypass project. I received confirmation today that the subject of environmental clearance for this project has been placed on the California Transportation Commission's agenda for the upcoming meeting (February 28, 2002). It is my understanding that the CTC has requested that the US Fish & Wildlife Service attend the meeting and provide a progress report regarding their efforts to achieve a consensus about biological impacts and mitigations so that the project may receive environmental clearance before or immediately after the meeting on February 28, 2002.

This memo is intended to provide you with the latest about our effort with Caltrans, the FHWA, and the Fish & Wildlife Service to achieve resolution for the red-legged frog issue, hence environmental clearance of the Amador 49 Bypass project this month. Caltrans and the FHWA have developed new language in the Amador 49 Bypass project description and mitigation program that enables the project and program to be adjusted so that they address Fish & Wildlife Service concerns for habitat replacement. According to FHWA, this must be done without suggesting the presence of red-legged frogs (a fact which is not proven). It must also be done without major changes or cost increases to the project or its mitigation program (since it would then be mitigating something that's not proven to exist). This information is being sent to the Fish & Wildlife Service today (Wednesday, February 13, 2002). We expect to find out whether or not the information is acceptable to the Fish & Wildlife Service or how much more discussion/negotiation will be required by the end of this week or early next week.

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ACTC and Caltrans project managers will be carrying out daily follow-up communications with Fish & Wildlife Service as well as Caltrans and the FHWA to try and ensure that agreement and the necessary environmental clearance is assured before the CTC meeting on February 28, 2002.

Sincerely,

Charles Field
Executive Director

CF/nc