

NOAA Office of General Counsel for Ocean Services
1305 East-West Highway, Room 6111
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Dear Secretary Gutierrez:

The completion of State Route 241 in Southern California is critical to the California economy and to the national interest. I urge you to override the California Coastal Commission's objection to State Route 241 based on the following facts:

Foothill-South is Part of the Master Plan

The 241 is an important component of the approved Southern California Regional Transportation Plans and California's federal Clean Air Act Implementation Plan.

In 2005, after analyzing 24 alternatives, the proposed Foothill-South alignment was identified by the federal and state transportation and environmental agencies as the environmentally preferable alternative to solve the current and projected gridlock on Interstate 5.

The Economy Depends on Foothill-South

Completing the 241 is critical to the economy of Southern California. It provides an alternative to Interstate 5, the only north-south route between Los Angeles and San Diego. Traffic on I-5 is already gridlocked and traffic is expected to increase 60 percent by 2025 if the road is not completed. The increase in trade from Mexico and the Far East is imposing enormous demands on the Southern California regional transportation system. The completion of State Route 241 is essential to relieve congestion on I-5 attributable to increased international trade

Human Safety Comes First

SR 241 will provide an alternative evacuation route if I-5 is shut down (as occurred last Fall during the Southern California wildfires) and in case of an emergency at San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station. State Route 241 also include important training and national security and infrastructure improvements at the U.S. Marine Corps Base at Camp Pendleton.

Alternatives Trumpeted by Opponents are Ill Planned

Widening I-5, the alternative favored by project opponents, would have massive impacts on coastal communities. It would require the elimination of more than 1,000 homes and businesses – including many low and moderate cost coastal visitor-serving facilities

The Federal Highway Administration and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) evaluated these alternatives and concluded that they were not feasible, and had enormous impacts on the human environment. Among many other problems, the state and federal transportation agencies concluded that there is no funding for the various I-5 widening alternatives. Caltrans has concluded that it violates state design and safety standards.

This project is important to me, my community and the national economy.

Sincerely,