



Smith River Rancheria

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October 30, 2013

Mrs. Tamera Leighton, Director
Del Norte Local Transportation Commission
1301-B Northcrest Drive, #16
Crescent City, CA 95531

RE: Highway 101 Last Chance Grade

Dear Mrs., Leighton:

The Aboriginal lands of the Smith River Rancheria Tolowa Dee-nee' include the land bounded by Wilson Creek to the South, the Sixes River to the North, East to the Applegate watershed in the Coastal Range, and West to the Pacific Ocean, including Point St. George Lighthouse. The above lands constitute our place of origin and our continued habitation and occupancy, as confirmed by the ancestral villages of our people with these boundaries Yan'-daa 'k'vt, ("Yontocket") is the spiritual center of the Tolowa world, and Xaa-wan' k'vt, ("Howonquet") is the seat of the Smith River Rancheria Tribal Government.

The Smith River Rancheria is always ready and prepared to assist community-based efforts that have the purpose of working towards dealing with threats to the economic viability and community well-being within the boundaries of these aboriginal lands. This is one of the underlying reasons that Smith River Rancheria submits this letter to the Del Norte Local Transportation Commission, strongly advocating with all federal and state agencies involved with the ease of egress to build a route around Last Chance Grade on Highway 101, south of Crescent City.

It is well known that it is only matter of time before US Highway 101 at Last Chance Grade collapses and slides into the ocean. When this happens, it will have a dire economic and citizens based negative impact on Del Norte County. The Tribe's opinion is that to continue to expend large sums of taxpayers' dollars on a "Band-Aid" approach to fixing this problem is irresponsible. When road collapses, Caltrans would then start to build a new road most likely going through the area where a road could be started now.

In summary, it's the Smith River Rancheria strongly held conviction that we cannot and should not have to wait until the inevitable disaster happens on Last Chance Grade. Let us work together and advocate for a permanent solution to this long-term problem plaguing Del Norte County.

Sincerely,

Kara Brundin Miller, Chairperson
On Behalf of the Tribal Council

*Waa-saa-ghitlh-'a~ Wee-ni Naa-ch'aa-ghitlh-ni
Our Heritage Is Why We Are Strong*