



YUROK TRIBE

190 Klamath Boulevard • Post Office Box 1027 • Klamath, CA 95548

December 18, 2013
Mrs. Tamera Leighton, Director
Del Norte Local Transportation Commission
1301-B Northcrest Drive, #16
Crescent City, CA 95501

Re: Last Chance Grade Slide – Highway 101

Dear Mrs. Leighton,

“The Ancestral Lands of the Yurok Tribe along the Pacific Coast extend from Damnation Creek to the southern boundary of the Little River drainage basin...included within these lands is the drainage basin of Wilson Creek.” (Yurok Constitution, Article I, Section I)

The areas surrounding last chance grade have been used by the Yurok Tribe since time immemorial for means of travel, natural resources, cultural gathering and preservation. The Yurok Tribal Council continues to strongly support the involvement of the Yurok Tribe’s Cultural Department in cultural resource protection for any alternative highway route around Last Chance Grade. This involvement extends much further than the NEPA/NHPA compliance portion of the environmental review. To further successful agency coordination, the Tribe requests to be a co-manager on the current feasibility study and work closely with the Del Norte Transportation Commission, Caltrans, Redwood National & State Parks, and the other Tribes to find long-term solutions to this regional issue.

Highway 101 is an extremely significant road to the Yurok government and its Tribal members. Any significant failure of the Highway 101 at Last Chance Grade will create an imminent threat to the health and safety of the residents living in Del Norte County. Residents from the town of Klamath will be cut off from emergency service personnel (police, search and rescue, fire and medical). Economic infrastructure and enterprises owned by the County and the Yurok Tribe will be compromised.

Finally, Yurok Tribe supports the Del Norte Local Transportation Commission’s advocacy for Federal and State funding for an alternative route around the Last Chance Grade on Highway 101 and looks forward to continued coordination between the various County, state, federal and Tribal agencies involved.

Respectfully,

Thomas P. O'Rourke Sr.
Yurok Tribal Chairperson