

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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*Serious drought.
Help save water!*

August 8, 2014

The Honorable Jim Nielsen
California State Senator
State Capitol, Room 4062
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Senator Nielsen:

Thank you for your letter on June 26, 2014 regarding the segment of State Route 101 in Del Norte County commonly known as "Last Chance Grade."

As many of our coastal highways experience ground movement and shifting, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) continually monitors, evaluates, and repairs coastal highways. Caltrans recognizes the significance of the potential loss of this particular highway segment and is diligently working with our partners and stakeholders to develop an alternative solution. While a full roadway closure between Klamath and Crescent City has yet to occur, in such an event travelers would be subject to a 451-mile detour.

Caltrans initiated an engineering feasibility study in 2013 in collaboration with other governmental agencies and local stakeholders as the Last Chance Grade is surrounded by sensitive and unique State and National Park resources, and the costs and impacts of viable alternatives need to be carefully considered. The study takes into account prior studies, available data, and the information gathered by earlier projects for the development and exploration of alternatives. The study is scheduled to be completed by summer 2015. While the study is intended to advance a long-term solution, it would also contribute to the timely development of an emergency project should the need arise.

Once the study is completed, Caltrans will develop a project initiation document, which is required to compete for funding. As a long-term solution at this location would likely come at a high cost, Caltrans has begun the process of making the highway eligible for the federal program for Projects of National and Regional Significance. Once funding is secured, an environmental impact report can be prepared.

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More information about the current status of the Last Chance Grade study and related information can be found at the following website:
<http://www.dot.ca.gov/dist1/d1/projects/last_chance_grade/>

Caltrans is committed to maintaining the safety and operability of this vital link in Del Norte County and to finding a more sustainable solution. If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact Assistant Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs Melanie Perron at (916) 654-2397 or <melanie.perron@dot.ca.gov>. We look forward to working with your office on this endeavor.

Sincerely,



MALCOLM DOUGHERTY
Director

c: Scott Feller, District Representative for California State Senator Jim Nielsen
Melanie Perron, Caltrans Assistant Deputy Director for Legislative Affairs

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Sandy Runyan

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