



CITY OF BISHOP

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December 11, 2007

Mr. James C. Ghielmetti
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS-52
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Chairman Ghielmetti:

At the direction and with the support of the City Council of Bishop, I am writing to express our support for the Independence-Manzanar Four-Lane project. At your December 12th Commission meeting, you will be asked to approve several resolutions of necessity for this project. I ask that you do so without further delay.

Projects to expand the capacity of US 395, such as the Independence-Manzanar project, have historically been supported by the City of Bishop, through our participation in the decisions of the Local Transportation Commission. For this project, this has included deferring projects, on and off the state highway system, which would help relieve congestion within the City of Bishop. It has also included funding construction of this project in partnership with Mono County, Kern County, and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), when Interregional Improvement Program funds were not available. We are concerned that continued delays by the California Transportation Commission will result in missed schedules and increased costs.

In the City of Bishop, as in most of Inyo County, private property rights are strongly protected. We understand and appreciate the Commission's reluctance to proceed with condemnation of private property. However, such considerations should not be used to delay this much-needed project, or to pressure Caltrans to make modifications that are not in the best interest of the citizens of California. We are concerned that your Commission's direction in October that Caltrans find a way to "resolve this" with the property owners may provide a strong incentive to make whatever changes may satisfy a few parcel owners at the cost of providing the best project. The preservation of a few feet from the front of a parcel should not drive project scope changes.

I will be present to make a statement in support of this project on behalf of the City of Bishop at your December Commission meeting. Until then, I would be happy to answer any questions you may have concerning our support of this project.

Sincerely,



Frank Crom
Mayor