

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**

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*Serious drought.  
Help save water!*

April 7, 2017

Dear California Congressional Delegation Member

In 2017, California suffered the most severe winter storm events it has seen in 20 years, brought on by “atmospheric river” weather phenomena. In addition to damages to the Oroville Dam Spillway, the enclosed “2017 Severe Winter Storms” presentation illustrates major storm damage to highways, roads and bridges throughout the state. In January, more than nine feet of snow fell over Donner Summit in only seven days. In that same week, the storm brought as much as ten inches of rain in some places, and several corridors were flooded along the coast and inland. February offered no respite, as the torrential winter continued, and we had to deal with mudslides, rockslides, slip outs, and washouts – not to mention snowdrifts and avalanche control. All-in-all, the Donner Summit area received more than 56 feet of snow between January and February 2017.

Caltrans’ dedicated maintenance crews have been up to the task, with many working 24 hours per day, on 12-hour shifts, responding to dozens of closures and working tirelessly to clear and repair damaged roadways. At some points in February, we had about 3,500 maintenance employees, dozens of information officers, and just under 400 engineers working around the clock to inform the public, and assess and repair roadways impacted by the winter storms. In addition, over 270 emergency contracts have been executed to augment Caltrans’ staff and quickly restore access to state roads.

As a result of the 2017 Severe Winter Storms, designated Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) disaster code CA 17-2, Caltrans current (as of late-March 2017) preliminary damage estimate for the State Highway System is approximately \$814 million, with an additional \$400 million for local roads. However, only \$100 million is authorized annually by the FHWA Emergency Relief Program for the emergency repair and restoration of federal-aid highway facilities. In fact, the \$100 million Emergency Relief Program annual authorization is frequently exceeded, and, therefore, Congress has periodically provided additional funds for the Emergency Relief Program through Supplemental Appropriations. To date, Caltrans has received a \$10 million FHWA “quick release” Emergency Relief allocation for work associated with the 2017 Severe Winter Storms (CA 17-2).

Given the magnitude of the California 2017 Severe Winter Storm (CA 17-2) damage, which greatly exceeds the total annual authorization for the FHWA Emergency Relief Program, I am

Given the magnitude of the California 2017 Severe Winter Storm (CA 17-2) damage, which greatly exceeds the total annual authorization for the FHWA Emergency Relief Program, I am requesting your support for including additional FHWA Emergency Relief funding in the federal fiscal year (FY) 2018 appropriation bill for Transportation, Housing and Urban Development (THUD), a Supplemental Appropriations bill, or any federal infrastructure investment legislation Congress considers this year to address California's 2017 Severe Winter Storm (CA 17-2) damage.

In addition to the damage associated with California's 2017 Severe Winter Storm (CA 17-2), you should also be aware that Caltrans has identified to FHWA a total need for \$546 million in Emergency Relief funding for repairs associated with natural disaster and catastrophic failure events dating back to October 1990. Included within this Emergency Relief backlog, I would also like to highlight four events that occurred prior to October 1, 2012, each with total Emergency Relief funding needs greater than \$100 million as well as significant remaining needs.

<b>Disaster</b>	<b>Disaster Date</b>	<b>California ER Need (Incl. Fed. Lands)</b>	<b>Obligations to Date</b>	<b>Remaining ER Need</b>
December 2004 Storms (CA05-1)	12/28/04	\$341,751,062	\$312,304,136	\$29,446,926
December 2006 Storms (CA06-1)	12/19/05	\$447,704,945	\$342,002,079	\$105,702,866
January 2010 Storms (CA10-1)	01/17/10	\$117,274,380	\$92,031,177	\$22,743,203
March 2011 Storms (CA11-3)	03/15/11	\$247,726,016	\$98,945,066	\$147,780,950

While the repairs associated with these events are eligible for Emergency Relief funding, and can be used as soon as Congress makes funding available, additional Emergency Relief expenditures for these events are currently capped because they occurred prior to October 1, 2012.<sup>1</sup> In past Supplemental Appropriations, Congress has provided Emergency Relief funding to address the ongoing needs associated with specific events requiring expenditures over \$100 million. Therefore, I respectfully request Congress to provide sufficient Emergency Relief funding to fully address California's Emergency Relief needs, including these events, in the FY 2018 THUD appropriations or any Supplemental Appropriations or federal infrastructure investment legislation it considers this year.

<sup>1</sup>The Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Act (MAP-21; P.L. 112-141) eliminated the \$100 million per State per event cap that was previously applied to Emergency Relief program, however the \$100 million cap still applies to events that occurred prior to October 1, 2012.

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For additional information about this request, please contact Giles Giovinazzi, Federal Transportation Liaison, Caltrans and the California High-Speed Rail Authority at [giles.giovinazzi@dot.ca.gov](mailto:giles.giovinazzi@dot.ca.gov) or (916) 214-6144.

Thank you again for your continued leadership on behalf of the state of California.

Sincerely,



MALCOLM DOUGHERTY

Enclosure