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California Coastal Commission via electronic mail
San Diego Coast District Office
Attn: Gabriel Buhr gbuhr@coastal.ca.gov, cluster@coastal.ca.gov
7575 Metropolitan Drive Ste. 103
San Diego, CA 92108-4402

Re: North Coast Corridor Public Works Plan/Transportation and Resource Enhancement Program, Thursday, January 9, 2014, Item Th5a

Dear Commissioners,

With many fond memories of my “coastal life cycle,” a 600-mile bicycle ride from San Francisco to San Diego to publicize efforts by the Coastal Alliance to win passage of Proposition 20 thus creating the Coastal Commission, I write to you for three purposes. First, to inform the Commissioners that alternatives exist to the I-5 widening Project that will allow San Diego to meet its transportation objectives without savage destruction of our coastline. Second, to notify you that, astonishingly, Caltrans has not studied any of these alternatives. Third, to request that the Commission retain a renowned transportation expert to study the merits of the Cleveland National Forest Foundation’s, (www.cnff.org), 50-10 Transit Plan, (http://www.transitsandiego.org/transitsandiego/pdf/50-10_PlanFinal.pdf), as the answer to North Coast Corridor transportation mobility problems.

Two of my fundamental objectives while in the State Senate involved increasing funds for public transportation and environmental protection. I introduced bills which imposed the sales tax on gasoline to fund transit development, and authored a constitutional amendment allowing a portion of state highway funds to build rail transit systems, and to fund multimodal projects. From the vantage point of decades of work on transit legislation and as former director of Amtrak, I respectfully request that the Commission retain Professor Robert Cervero, an expert in the area of sustainable transportation policy and planning, (<http://ced.berkeley.edu/ced/faculty-staff/robert-cervero>), to model the 50-10 Transit Plan as the alternative to Caltrans’ auto-centric I-5 project. The 50-10 Plan is achievable, endorsed by myself and many transit experts and will increase transportation mobility along the North Coast corridor without strangling our coastal communities with the politics of sprawl.

The 50-10 Plan has an illustrious history. Born out of long struggles with unchecked regional growth, the 50-10 Plan emerged from such studies as SANDAG’s Independent Transit Planning Review, (http://www.sandag.org/uploads/publicationid/publicationid_1274_6239.pdf), the Complete Mobility Plan, and the Settlement Agreement between SANDAG, Save Our Forest and Ranchlands and the California Attorney General with regard to SANDAG’s 2007 RTP,

(http://www.sofar.org/pdf/SANDAG_SOFAR_Settlement2.pdf). The premise of the 50-10 Plan is quite simple – implement the transit projects in SANDAG’s 2050 RTP over the next ten years, rather than forty years. This comprehensive, integrated transit system would initially be focused within the region’s urban core (including the Sprinter and the Coaster corridors), where existing and future higher density land uses would best complement the expanded transit services.

As shown in SANDAG’s Urban Area Transit Study attachment, SANDAG has already determined that significant transit mode shares are possible in these corridors. Obviously, activation of these mode shares would dramatically relieve highway congestion and promote transit-based land use. In support of these ideas, the 50-10 Plan calls for deferring new highway and/or toll-way construction until the transit system is fully functional. Importantly, the Plan underscores the importance of modifying the *TransNet* financing program to reflect public transit priority over highway projects. San Diego public surveys have repeatedly shown that a majority of citizens support funding public transit over freeways.

In 2003, two years before Governor’s Schwarzenegger’s Executive Order 03-05 I was quoted in the San Francisco Gate. "We can't continue the kind of growth we've had in the past. Allowing disorderly sprawl is not an option that should be entertained." Although Governor Schwarzenegger and I come from the red and blue ends of the political spectrum, the crisis of climate change is global and unites us in an urgent call for action.

There are many reasons - social, environmental and economic - to promote transit first, and given the threat to our oceans and coast from climate change, destroying all of the work we have done to save this resource, we must act decisively. As one who helped create this Commission, I encourage you to fulfill your mission.

Thank You,

James R. Mills

CC: Jack Shu, President, CNFF

