



THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIN

ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
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April 13, 2010

Bijan Sartipi, Director, District Four
California Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 23660
Oakland, CA 94623-0660

Dear Mr. Sartipi,

I am writing on behalf of the Marin County Board of Supervisors to request Caltrans' acquisition of a conservation easement on an approximately 200 acre portion of the Lawson's Landing property in Dillon Beach to fulfill mitigation requirements related to loss of red-legged frog habitat that will occur when constructing the Marin-Sonoma Narrows Highway 101 safety improvement project. The Lawson site is specifically identified as eligible for the mitigation in the USFWS Biological Opinion incorporated into the Narrows project EIR. USFWS personnel also have a long history of active involvement in efforts to secure conservation easements at Lawson's Landing as part of a broad coalition of environmental organizations and agencies seeking to protect the unique coastal dune habitat.

The Board of Supervisors supports Caltrans' selection of Lawson's Landing for the Narrows mitigation for reasons that extend beyond its quality red-legged frog habitat. The site received Board approval for year-round camping facilities in 2008, after over forty years in a contentious and expensive public process. The approved project will greatly increase environmental protections and requires ongoing monitoring to insure compliance with established conditions. In addition, historic camping areas have been reduced in area and relocated to reduce impacts and road, sewer, and other infrastructure will be significantly modified and upgraded. To finance these beneficial changes, the owners are dependent upon obtaining compensation for the unique habitat values that are being protected.

Marin County is joined by Assemblymember Jared Huffman, all active environmental organizations in Marin County, and statewide institutions such as the Coastal Conservancy in seeking Caltrans selection of Lawson's Landing for mitigation of loss in red-legged frog habitat through the Narrows. The proposed cost of acquiring and managing the easement is well within the identified mitigation budget for the Narrows, and the Marin County Open Space District is prepared to hold the easement, providing a trusted oversight role going forward.

We appreciate your consideration of our interest and ask that you respect the wishes of the many interested parties who have worked so long to protect our coastal environment while being fair to the property owners. I may be reached at 415-499-7331 if you would like to discuss this matter with me.

Sincerely,

Judy Arnold

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