



2001 Howard Road, Suite 201
Madera, California 93637

Office: 559-675-0721 Facsimile: 559-675-9328
Website: www.maderactc.org

March 14, 2023

Tony Tavares, Director
California Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 942873
Sacramento, CA 94273-0001

Re: Draft 2023 State Highway System Management Plan: Climate Adaptation and Resilience

Dear Mr. Tavares:

California is set to make a historical investment of \$1.744 billion of Climate Adaptation and Resilience program funding through the Draft 2023 State Highway System Management Plan (SHSMP) to address the impacts of climate change. The importance of this funding opportunity to address the recent and annually occurring climate threats and impacts from wildfire, flooding, landslides, snow impacts, and other extreme weather impacts cannot be understated. An investment of this magnitude can provide significant benefits and strategically reduce climate impacts across the diverse regions of the state.

The Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) is concerned that the landmark climate funding as proposed in the Draft 2023 SHSMP only targets risks associated with sea level rise, as identified in Appendix B-33. Only the coastal districts are identified with climate "Baseline Inventory" deficiencies related to sea level rise and it appears that no other "Baseline Inventory" deficiencies are included in relation to other climate impacts such as flooding and wildfire. With the climate adaptation and resiliency investment as proposed, California is missing a strategic opportunity to address inland climate vulnerabilities and adaptation needs. Many of these inland areas that are impacted by these climate risks are also areas of persistent poverty, historically disadvantaged communities, AB 1550 low median income, and SB 535 disadvantaged communities.

Baseline inventory deficiencies need to be represented in an equitable manner based on recent and current climate disasters in California. In addition, many of these inland areas in California are also areas of persistent poverty, historically disadvantaged communities, and low-income regions, thus raising geographic equity concerns as well.

Member Agencies: County of Madera, City of Madera, City of Chowchilla

The Climate Action Plan Transportation Infrastructure (CAPTI) Framework specifically addresses the importance of “facilitating emergency evacuations through efficient traffic management strategies, such as the use of contra flow, use of two-way left turn lanes as through travel lanes, construction of full structural sections of shoulders and installation of Transportation Management System elements”. MCTC supports these strategies and were hopeful to see the 2023 SHSMP consider these investments as top priorities in response to the immense vulnerability of the State Highway System to wildfire in rural communities. Caltrans must consider investing in all impacts to the State Highway System, not just those along the coastal communities. Inland valley and mountain regions also experience the devastating impacts of climate change, and it is Caltrans’ responsibility to mitigate the impacts of climate to state transportation infrastructure across California and provide safe and effective access into and out of the communities at risk in all regions of the state.

The need for adequate evacuation routes with appropriate state highway improvements in rural California cannot be understated. Safety now, should be California’s top priority. I hope we do not rush through this process, have an open conversation in person with stakeholders and identify a balanced set of priorities that benefit all Californians.

We appreciate your consideration of our comments. If you have any questions, please contact me at (559) 675-0721 or patricia@maderactc.org.

Sincerely,



Patricia Taylor, Executive Director
Madera County Transportation Commission