

POLITICO GROUP

November 9, 2021

To: The Honorable Jose Rodriguez, Chair, Madera County Transportation Commission
The Honorable Robert Poythress, Commissioner, Madera County Transportation Commission
The Honorable Daron McDaniel, Board Member, Merced County Association of Governments
The Honorable Pete Vander Poel, III, Chair, Tulare County Association of Governments
The Honorable Rudy Mendoza, Board Member, Tulare County Association of Governments
Patricia Taylor, Executive Director, Madera County Transportation Commission
Stacie Guzman, Executive Director, Merced County Association of Governments
Theodore Smalley, Executive Director, Tulare County Association of Governments

From: Kiana Valentine, Partner, Politico Group

Re: **Update on the Launch of the State Route 99 Finish What We Started Campaign**

Background. Politico Group, the Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC), the Merced County Association of Governments (MCAG), and the Tulare County Association of Governments (TGAC) have invested significant time and resources over the past few months to operationalize the State Route (SR) 99 Finish What We Started Campaign. Activities included building a robust coalition of support for the effort, connecting with local, regional, legislative, and statewide elected officials and stakeholders, and finalizing key messages, developing collateral, and building out a project map, [website](#), and other social media content. These efforts culminated on October 22 with the transmission of the attached letter calling on Governor Newsom and his Administration to commit to fully funding and constructing the remaining segments on SR 99.

Coalition. We are pleased to report that the coalition building effort was received with much enthusiasm. We have nearly 40 entities represented on the coalition letter to Governor Newsom ranging from local and statewide business organizations to local and regional governments to organized labor. The coalition boasts the agricultural industry, public health, and health care organizations too. We look forward to continuing to build out the coalition and hope to add additional representation from labor, business, goods movement related industries, and more.

Funding Opportunities. The launch of the campaign was also strategic in that the Draft 2022 Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP) was submitted to the California Transportation Commission (CTC) on October 15th and includes funding for these key SR 99 projects:

- The **South Madera 6 Lane Widening Project** (Madera County from south of Avenue 7 to north of Avenue 12). This project will eliminate the 5.8 mile, four-lane bottleneck on SR 99 in the southbound and northbound directions, between Fresno and Madera by providing an additional lane in each direction in the median.
- The **Tulare City Widening Project**. This project will eliminate the 5 mile, four-lane bottleneck on SR 99 in the City of Tulare, between Avenue 200 and Prosperity Avenue by providing an additional lane in each direction in the median.
- The **Livingston Widening Southbound Project** (Merced County). This project is 8 miles from south of Hammatt Ave to the Merced/Stanslaus County line. The widening is from 2 to 3 lanes in the median. SR

99 north and south of the project area is an existing six-lane freeway. The Livingston Widening *Northbound* Project is currently under construction.

- The **South Tulare 99 Project** (northwards from Delano). Funded specifically with SR 99 bond funds (expected CTC action January 2022), this innovative project will make permanent 13.5 miles of temporary lanes in southern Tulare.

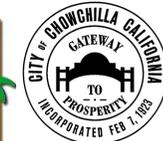
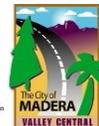
We will continue to pursue other funding opportunities such as SB 1 competitive grant programs and other state general fund resources. For instance, the 2021-22 state budget transportation package remains unfinished. We are exploring all avenues to maximize funding for SR 99 in the current year and in the 2022-23 state budget and beyond.

Legislative and Administrative Outreach. We have been working in close coordination with Senator Hurtado and her key staff. Collectively, we reached out to other San Joaquin Valley legislators to brief them on the three-county effort, the larger coalition building process, and that an ask of the Administration was imminent. As a result, the attached letter was sent to Governor Newsom from nine of the San Joaquin Valley's legislative delegation in tandem with the MCTC/MCAG/TCAG led coalition letter. Securing this bipartisan state elected official support was a great achievement and we look forward to continuing to work with the delegation to create energy and positive pressure to finalize a commitment from the state.

Next Steps. Politico Group, MCTC, MCAG, and TCAG continue to meet biweekly to ensure we are sharing related intelligence, developing creative ideas and solutions, and generally ensuring coordination and that our Sacramento based efforts are complementary of local efforts and vice versa. Upcoming key milestones and deliverables include:

1. A meeting with the California State Transportation Agency, California Department of Transportation, and the California Transportation Commission to discuss our request and hold the state accountable for investing in SR 99. This meeting will include participation from the three-county local elected officials. It may include the San Joaquin Valley's legislative delegation.
2. Planning, hosting, and executing an SR 99 summit. While an SR 99 summit has been on the table for some time, the Draft 2022 ITIP requires a focused convening as a condition of funding for the South Madera 6 Lane Widening Project.
3. Aiding Caltrans in the development of a comprehensive multimodal corridor study for SR 99, another prerequisite for Draft 2022 ITIP funding.
4. Engaging in the 2021-22 State Budget transportation funding negotiations and the development of the 2022-23 State Budget.
5. Leveraging the robust coalition to echo support for SR 99 in a variety of contexts – from CTC meetings to SB 1 funding programs to our State Budget related efforts.

Contact. For more information regarding the SR 99 Finish What We Started Campaign, please contact Kiana Valentine at (916) 444-3770 or kiana@politicogroup.com.



October 22, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: **Finish What We Started – A Call to Action to Complete State Route 99, Improve Public Safety, Invest in our Economy, and Enhance Overall Quality of Life in California**

Dear Governor Newsom:

The undersigned organizations, businesses, and associations write to urge you and your Administration to fully commit to funding and building a completed State Route (SR) 99. The inclusion of funding for SR 99 in the Draft 2022 Interregional Transportation Improvement Plan (ITIP) is an important investment and we hope that it will serve as the building block from which the vital corridor is finally finished.

SR 99 serves as a critical north-south corridor for goods movement throughout California, which aids in the following:

- Supports the movement of freight throughout California with 1.3 million daily truck trips. Ninety percent of freight through the San Joaquin Valley moves by truck, primarily on SR 99.
- Supports jobs and economic activity with approximately 44 percent of all employment in the San Joaquin Valley associated with goods movement-dependent industries – more than goods movement related employment in all other regions of California.
- Supports the largest agricultural region in the United States. The San Joaquin Valley generates more than \$45 billion in ag products annually – and provides 25 percent of the nation's food supply.
- Represents a vital travel corridor for the 4.4 million residents of the San Joaquin Valley.



Despite recent investments into the corridor, SR 99 remains unfinished resulting in needless congestion, hampering economic activity, negatively impacting quality of life, and deleteriously impacting air quality and climate change. The currently incomplete SR 99 also poses a serious danger to the traveling public – going from six-lanes to four-lanes and back again numerous times.

Making good on the promise of SR 99 will have many and varied positive outcomes for the *entire* State of California – decreasing congestion, alleviating safety issues and associated fatalities and serious injuries, increasing our economic competitiveness and vitality, and creating living-wage jobs. These benefits can be realized while also achieving the state’s air quality and climate change goals.

Recent investments into the SR 99 corridor, including significant local funding from countywide sales-tax measures and Proposition 1B (the 2006 \$19.9 billion transportation infrastructure bond), have helped close the gap, but those efforts will be for naught if we do not finish the job. Eight segments totaling 35 miles out of the 274-mile SR 99 corridor through Merced, Madera, and Tulare counties remain unfunded. These unfinished segments include approximately 12 dangerous bottlenecks along this vital corridor.

We must be cautious with respect to how our climate policies impact our economy and the safety of our state’s residents. The state’s multimodal transportation system, including its highways, streets, and roads are the backbone of our robust economy, and policies that undermine our infrastructure will have serious consequences.

We must find a way to fight climate change, while also continuing to invest in a surface transportation network that moves goods, services, and people efficiently and safely. The choke points and safety issues created as heavy-duty trucks and passenger vehicles move from six to four lanes through the SR 99 corridor can only be fully eliminated by completing the corridor.

In closing, we recognize the multiple challenges facing the state, including the state’s ambitious climate goals, and are confident a completed six-lane SR 99 corridor can and should play an important role in California’s future. In fact, the San Joaquin Valley has demonstrated it can meet the state’s aggressive GHG emission reduction goals while finishing SR 99 through the development, adoption, and state approval of its SB 375 mandated Sustainable Communities Strategy.

Again, we are thankful for the inclusion of ITIP funding for SR 99 and we respectfully request that the California State Transportation Agency and the California Department of Transportation work with the San Joaquin Valley to develop and implement a 15-year plan to complete SR 99 – to finish what we started. We stand ready to work with you and your Administration towards this virtuous end.

Sincerely,

/s/

The Honorable Pete Vander Poel
Chair
Tulare County Association of Governments

The Honorable Lloyd Pareira
Chair
Merced County Association of Governments

The Honorable Jose Rodriquez
Chair
Madera County Transportation Commission

The Honorable Daron McDaniel
Chair
County of Merced

The Honorable Robert Poythress
Chair
County of Madera

Michael Quigley
Executive Director
California Alliance for Jobs

The Honorable Linda Launer
Mayor
City of Dinuba

Jon Switalski
Executive Director
Rebuild SoCal Partnership

The Honorable Monte Reyes
Mayor
City of Porterville

Rob Lapsley
President
California Business Roundtable

The Honorable Diana Palmer
Mayor
City of Chowchilla

Shane A. Gusman
Legislative Director
Teamsters

The Honorable Rudy Mendoza
Mayor
City of Woodlake

Mark Watts
Legislative Advocate
Transportation California

Arnoldo Garcia
City Manager
City of Madera

Todd Bloomstein
Legislative Advocate
Southern California Contractors Association

Robbie Hunter
President
State Building and Construction Trades Council

Russel Snyder
Executive Director
California Asphalt Pavement Association

Joe Cruz
Executive Director
California State Council of Laborers

Ray Baca
Executive Director
Engineering Contractors' Association

Tim Cremins
Political Director
International Union of Operating Engineers

Jennifer Ward
Sr. Vice President
Orange County Business Council

Jay Bradshaw
Executive Secretary-Treasurer
Northern California Carpenters Regional Council

Cesar Lara
President
Western Regional Association of Pavement
Preservation

Emily Cohen
Executive Vice President
United Contractors

Jerry Sinift
Chief Executive Officer
Tulare International Agriculture Center

Eric Sauer
Sr. Vice President of Government Affairs
California Trucking Association

Christ Hiatt
Vice President
American Honey Producers Association

Peter Tateishi
Executive Director
Associated General Contractors of California

Paulo Soares
Chief Executive Officer
Camarena Health

Todd Suntrapak
President, Chief Executive Officer
Valley Children's Healthcare

Debi Bray
President, Chief Executive Officer
Madera Chamber of Commerce

Breanne Vandenberg
Executive Director
Merced County Farm Bureau

Bobby Kahn
Executive Director
Madera Economic Development Commission

Tony Weber
Chief Executive Officer
Golden Valley Health Centers

Christina Beckstead
Executive Director
Madera County Farm Bureau

Matt Hoffman
Chief Executive Officer
Hoffman Security

Sara Bosse
Executive Director
Madera County Public Health

Annissa Fragoso
President
Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
The Honorable Laura Friedman, Chair, Assembly Transportation Committee
Honorable Members, San Joaquin Valley Legislative Delegation
The Honorable David Kim, Secretary, California State Transportation Agency
The Honorable Toks Omishakin, Director, California State Department of Transportation
The Honorable Hilary Norton, Chair, California Transportation Commission
Mitch Weiss, Executive Director, California Transportation Commission
Ronda Paschal, Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
Mark Tollefson, Deputy Cabinet Secretary, Office of Governor Gavin Newsom
James Barba, Consultant, Office of Senate President pro Tempore Atkins
Julius McIntyre, Consultant, Office of Assembly Speaker Rendon



October 22, 2021

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of the State of California
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Finish What We Started – A Call to Action to Complete State Route 99

Dear Governor Newsom:

As San Joaquin Valley Legislators, we respectfully call upon your Administration to complete the 20-year effort to widen and make safety improvements to State Route (SR) 99 - a critical north-south corridor for goods movement throughout California.

The currently incomplete SR 99 poses a serious danger to the traveling public. Choke points and safety issues created as heavy duty trucks and passenger vehicles move from six to four lanes throughout the SR 99 corridor can only be fully eliminated by completing this transportation corridor. We must continue to invest in a surface transportation network that moves goods, services and people efficiently and safely.

Modernizing the older, narrower segments along SR 99 will generate many positive outcomes for the *entire* State of California – decreasing congestion, reducing fatalities and serious injuries, increasing our economic competitiveness and vitality, and creating living-wage jobs. These benefits can be realized while also achieving the state’s air quality and climate change goals.

We respectfully request the California State Transportation Agency and the California Department of Transportation work with the San Joaquin Valley to develop and implement a 15-year plan to fund and complete SR 99 – to finish what we started.

State Route 99 is vitally important because:

- This route supports 1.3 million daily truck trips. 90-percent of freight through the San Joaquin Valley moves by truck - primarily on SR 99.
- 44 percent of all employment in the San Joaquin Valley is associated with goods movement-dependent industries, more than goods movement related employment in all other regions of California.

- SR 99 supports the state's geographic and agricultural production center – an area generating more than \$45 billion in Agricultural products annually – and provides 25 percent of the nation's food supply.

Eight segments totaling 35 miles out of the 274-mile SR 99 corridor throughout the counties of Merced, Madera and Tulare remain unfunded. These unfinished segments include approximately 12 dangerous bottlenecks along this vital corridor.

We applaud you for your efforts to address the transportation needs of the Central Valley. Vehicle traffic – especially heavy truck traffic – continue to clog our highways unless efficiency and safety improvements are completed.

The transition to an electric fleet will certainly help deal with some aspects of climate changes, but regardless of motive power, vehicle traffic – especially heavy truck traffic – will still clog our highways unless efficiency and safety improvements are completed.

Critics are opposed to building more highway lanes, and expanding road lanes in general. Respectfully, this view is short-sighted when discussing the busiest state highway in the nation. Completing the widening of SR 99 will decrease air pollution by unclogging the often stagnant flow of truck freight by speeding truck traffic through congested areas. This will also improve overall motorist safety reducing accidents.

We respectfully request that the California State Transportation Agency and the California Department of Transportation work with the San Joaquin Valley to develop and implement a 15-year plan to complete SR 99 – to finish what we started.

Sincerely,



Melissa Hurtado
Senator, 14th District



Andreas Borgeas
Senator, 8th District



Anna Caballero
Senator, 12th District



Shannon Grove
Senator, 16th District



Frank Bigelow
Assemblymember, 5th District



Jim Patterson
Assemblymember, 23rd District



Devon Mathis
Assemblymember, 26th District



Rudy Salas
Assemblymember, 32nd District



Vince Fong
Assemblymember, 34th District

cc: The Honorable Lena Gonzalez, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
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