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2ND DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON
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WATER, POWER, AND OCEANS – RANKING MEMBER
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April 14, 2016

The Honorable Edmond G. Brown, Jr.
Governor of California
State Capitol, Suite 1173
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Governor Brown:

Thank you for your continued leadership on issues important to our North Coast, including your recent signing of the Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Act in Klamath. I write to urge you to issue a disaster declaration for the Del Norte County region recently submitted by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) through the California Office of Emergency Services (OES). Specifically, the Governor's Office Action Request identifies damage to Last Chance Grade on U.S. Highway 101 as a major component of the disaster proposal.

Last Chance Grade between Crescent City and Klamath is a four-mile landslide-prone stretch of federal highway that experienced significant damage during the 2015-2016 El Niño winter. Caltrans has spent \$36 million to repair the roadway due to slides since 1981. A significant failure of the roadway there would cut off most of Del Norte County from the state, and force detours of seven to eight hours. Caltrans has estimated that full closure of the roadway would cost the local economy alone \$130 million per year.

Caltrans has worked diligently to keep Last Chance Grade open despite difficult circumstances. I have been actively engaged with Caltrans in finding a permanent solution to this ongoing problem which would involve a major realignment of the road. A year ago, I convened a diverse group of stakeholders including elected officials and representatives from Del Norte and Humboldt counties, Crescent City, several Indian tribes, environmental groups, businesses, landowners and the California Highway Patrol. This group is working toward consensus on alternatives for the proposed bypass to ensure the project would protect environmental, commerce and community values. State and federal agencies are also fully engaged with Caltrans in identifying key issues that will need to be addressed for this project.

A long-term fix to the existing roadway's problems is among my highest priorities in the Second Congressional District and as a member of the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee. This is an opportunity to support a collaborative effort to solve a major threat to public safety and to the economy of the North Coast.

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I ask that you issue a disaster declaration that will allow Caltrans to begin the work needed to secure Last Chance Grade immediately and begin analysis of the larger permanent project as soon as possible. If your office has questions about this issue, please call John Driscoll in my Eureka district office at (707) 407-3585. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

Sincerely,



JARED HUFFMAN
Member of Congress