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The Honorable Randy "Duke" Cunningham
U.S. House of Representatives
2350 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515-0550

RE: Funding for I-5/SR 56 North Connectors

Dear Congressman Cunningham:

On behalf of the Rancho Bernardo Chamber of Commerce, I am writing in support of federal funding for the missing north connectors at I-5 and SR 56.

The Rancho Bernardo community is seriously impacted by the growing traffic on I-15 due in large part to the expansion of 4S Ranch and other communities West of Rancho Bernardo which have no other exit except I-15. We anxiously await the opening of SR 56 between I-15 and I-5. It is estimated that this connection will reduce traffic on I-15 by as much as 20%. However, in order to provide the kind of traffic relief that we need, the connections on either end of the freeway will need to flow well. Caltrans is building all of the links connecting SR 56 with I-15, and has already built the two south connectors to I-5, but no funding has been identified for the missing north connectors at I-5. These missing connectors will have a substantial impact on how effective SR 56 will be at relieving traffic on both I-5 and I-15.

The construction of the connectors is very important to achieving "smart growth" objectives in San Diego County, and preventing employees in San Diego from continuing to look for housing in outlying areas. If the connectors are delayed, 6,500 residential units (including 1,000 affordable units) in close proximity to a major employment center cannot be built. The 17,000 people that these units would house will have to look elsewhere – likely southern Riverside County – to find housing, causing further impacts to an already-congested I-15.

We cannot afford to wait to fund these important connectors, and urge you to support funding for them in this budget cycle. We further ask your cooperation into the expansion of the Lake Hodges Bridge widening project which will reduce the congestion of our commuters from North San Diego County and Riverside.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Powers
President/CEO

Rancho Bernardo Chamber of Commerce