



**Monterey Bay
Aquarium**

886 CANNERY ROW
MONTEREY, CA 93940
831.648.4800

March 13, 2017

Assembly Member Anna Caballero
P.O. Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0030

Via email to: Peter.Ansel@asm.ca.gov

Re: Support for AB 696 (Caballero): Department of Transportation: Prunedale Bypass: County of Monterey: disposition of excess properties

Dear Assembly Member Caballero:

On behalf of the Monterey Bay Aquarium, I write in support of Assembly Bill (AB) 696: Department of Transportation: Prunedale Bypass: County of Monterey: disposition of excess properties (as introduced, February 15, 2017). This bill will transfer the proceeds of the sale of the former Prunedale Bypass right-of-way parcels of land to the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC) for use on priority transportation projects in the US 101 corridor in Monterey County.

The Monterey Bay Aquarium supports this bill because the Highway 156/ US 101 interchange project is a highly congested road that is a top priority in our region. This corridor is key to the aquarium's ability to fulfill our mission of inspiring conservation of the ocean by bringing nearly 2 million visitors annually to the aquarium. Increasingly, these visitors are coming from Central Valley communities and the Hwy 156/US 101 corridor is the only access these visitors have to the ocean and its coastline.

Existing priority projects in the US 101 corridor in Monterey County face significant funding shortfalls. AB 696 would require the revenues from the sale of the Prunedale Bypass parcels to come back to TAMC, to be used for already programmed State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) or voter-approved Measure X projects in the US 101 corridor in Monterey County.

I understand that the US 101 Safety Improvements project would build frontage roads and make related safety improvements to US 101 in South Salinas and South Monterey County, supporting transport of agricultural products. AB 696 would ensure that millions of transportation dollars would come back to the local highway system for improvements that would benefit Monterey County's regional economic drivers: agriculture and tourism.

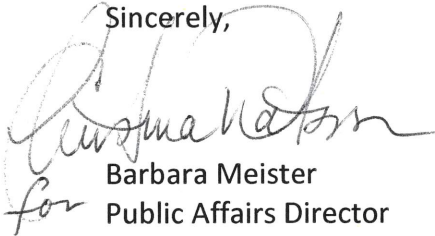


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Thank you very much for your authorship of this important bill and for supporting efforts to improve transportation in California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barbara Meister".

for
Barbara Meister
Public Affairs Director

cc: Debra L. Hale, TAMC