

Public Comment - Group 2

A-32

LATE
DIST

ALEX WEINSTEIN, MD

1405 Greenworth Pl., Santa Barbara, CA 93108

02/20/2023

County Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapuma St., Room 407
Santa Barbara, CA. 93101

RECEIVED

2023 FEB 24 P 3:42

COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CLERK OF THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear Members of the Board of Supervisors:

I live in Montecito just a few blocks away from the 101 freeway. The existing noise from the freeway is incredibly loud and I can only imagine how much worse it will be once the widening project is underway AND the freeway adds a lane on either side. Despite replacing all the windows in our home with double pane, sound reducing windows, the noise is still very bothersome and continues to get worse, especially from trucks and loud vehicles. The noise is very disturbing at night, often disturbing our sleep.

I am shocked that the relatively short segment of road widening in Montecito does not include the placement of sound walls as has been done for much of the widening project. A chain link fence is just not an acceptable alternative.

I hope the decision not to have sound walls can be reversed. If there is concern about increased risk of flooding related to sound walls than modify them in areas where there has been actual flooding and build them to maximize efficiency in areas that have had no flooding, such as most of the segment from San Ysidro to Olive Mill.

Carpinteria is in a similar location as Montecito with regards to the potential for flooding. I do not understand the rationale for allowing sound walls in Carpinteria but not in Montecito.

While doing the freeway widening, It would also seem to make sense to increase the size of the drainage culverts under the freeways as part of the construction to lessen the risk of flooding. In addition, as I think we saw in the latest heavy rains, the risk of significant flooding can be significantly reduced by keeping the debris basins and creeks properly cleared and open.

In addition to markedly improving the quality of life by reducing noise, sound walls and vegetation barriers help reduce near-road air pollution, thus also improving the health and safety in our community.

Please do the right thing and deny the application by Caltrans/SBCAG to eliminate the previously approved sound walls along the Montecito corridor, so that the original plans -- including sound walls -- will be required and retained for the freeway widening project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Weinstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

Alex J. Weinstein, MD

BETTY HELTON

1405 Greenworth Place, Santa Barbara CA 93108

February 19, 2023

Chris Schmuckal
Clerk, Board of Supervisors
105 E. Anapamu Street, Room 407
Santa Barbara CA 93101

RECEIVED
2023 FEB 24 P 3:43
COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA
CLERK OF THE
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Dear Members of the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors:

I write to appeal the decision by the Santa Barbara County Planning Commission to allow the elimination of sound walls in the Montecito corridor of the Caltrans Highway 101 Widening Project.

Although the decision we are appealing is the elimination of sound walls, its reasoning is based on flood risk. I will address my thoughts on each independently.

Flood Risk: The current plans for widening 101 predate the Thomas Fire and its associated flooding and debris flow. The existing drainage system under and near US101 in Montecito dates from the 1950s. Our local landscape has changed a lot in the last 60 years and will continue to change in the projected 50-to-75-year lifespan of the current Caltrans project. Clearly, these plans are already out-of-date and should be re-evaluated and modified to fit our new reality. Simply eliminating sound walls is no more than an indefensible attempt to avoid addressing the bigger, more costly problem of flood control. The offer of an "attractive" black chain link fence is an insult to our community.

Santa Barbara County and local citizens have made a major contribution to flood control with the use of ring nets, debris basins, and property drainage improvements. It remains for the county and Caltrans to address the ongoing problem of flooding at US101.

Sound Walls: Our family moved into the Montecito community in 1987. Our house is located about 250 feet east of Montecito Creek and 750 feet due north of US 101 and N. Jameson Lane at the point where 101N rises to cross Montecito Creek.

When we first arrived, there was some freeway noise at times of peak daytime traffic. Early mornings and evenings were quiet. Over the years, the noise coming from the freeway has steadily increased, the roaring abating by 11 PM only to return around 4:30 AM. Whoever said that the freeway noise in Montecito is no louder than a dishwasher has never visited our house. All our windows and doors have been replaced with new double paned, sound reducing units. It hasn't helped much. The bedrooms on the east side of our house are bathed in noise from US101 east of San Ysidro. In our bedroom on the west side of the house, the grinding gears of eighteen wheelers and the screaming of motorcycles racing up the 101N rise west of San Ysidro disrupts our sleep at 4:30 in the morning. A change in highway surface treatment will not reduce this noise.

As a physician, I feel that the mitigation of noise, dust and exhaust fumes are all important aspects of community health and should remain a serious concern for all those involved in any decision on the future of sound walls.

Flood Control and Sound Walls: Should the decision be made to raise the level of the freeway to allow for the construction of larger conduits but completed without the addition of sound walls, we might actually experience an increase in freeway noise should more of the road surface rise above the existing berms.

We have waited for years for the promise of sound walls. We have never opposed their placement. We now ask that you please consider the long term needs of our community and deny the application by Caltrans/SBCAG to eliminate the already approved sound walls along the Montecito corridor.

Betty Helton, MD