

October 4, 2016

Malcolm Dougherty
Director, California Department of Transportation
Director's Office, MS-49
1120 N Street
Sacramento, California 95814

RE: Letter of Intent for the State Scenic Highway Designation of Highway 101 along the Gaviota Coast

Dear Mr. Dougherty:

The County of Santa Barbara is pleased to submit this Letter of Intent to the California State Department of Transportation (Caltrans), to accompany the County's application for State Scenic Highway Designation of the Gaviota Coast corridor along State Highway 101. The Designation would extend from the western boundary of the City of Goleta, north to the intersection of Highway 101 and State Route 1 at Las Cruces.

This stretch of highway provides a rural, open space transition from highly urbanized, coastal, Southern California into Central California. This stretch of highway through the Gaviota Coast is the last best example of rural, coastal, Southern California, and is the largest remaining rural coastline within the southern region. Highway travelers are presented with spectacular views of grassy rolling hills and mountains, expansive views of the Pacific Ocean, and impressive rock formations of the Santa Ynez Mountains.

The County's intention to designate this corridor as scenic has been in effect since the Coastal Land Use Plan was adopted in 1982. Policy 4-8 of the Coastal Land Use Plan states:

The County shall request the State of California to designate that portion of Highway 101 between Winchester Canyon and Gaviota State Park as a "Scenic Highway."

Prior to adoption of the Coastal Land Use Plan, the entire length of Highway 101 within county boundaries was shown as an eligible Scenic Highway in the Scenic Highway Element of the County's General Plan (adopted in 1975). The Scenic Highways Element affirms that scenic vistas along Santa Barbara County's highways are a valuable resource, and preservation of this resource is important to both present and future County residents.

County policies and development standards have helped preserve the natural, scenic views along the Gaviota Coast over the past three decades. For example, Policy 7-13 in the Coastal Land Use Plan protects natural and visual resources within the Gaviota Coast Planning Area. Additionally, natural features, landforms, and native vegetation shall be preserved to the maximum extent feasible, according to Hillside and Watershed Protection Policy 2 in the Land Use Element. As a final example, the height, scale, and design of structures in rural areas shall be compatible with the character of the surrounding natural environment, per Visual Resource Policy 2 in the Land Use Element.

As you can see, the County of Santa Barbara has valued the outstanding and unique scenic qualities of the Gaviota coast for decades, and has the intent to protect and promote this special resource for future generations. As such, we are pleased to submit this application for State Scenic Highway Designation.

Sincerely,

Supervisor Peter Adam
Chairman, Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

cc: Board of Supervisors
Glenn Russell, Director of Planning and Development