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Brianda Negrete *Public Comment*

From: Executive Director <execdirector@montecitoassociation.org>
Sent: Tuesday, March 28, 2023 4:34 PM
To: sbcob
Subject: Letter from Montecito Association re Sound Wall Appeal April 4th
Attachments: BOS Sound wall appeal Letter 4_5.pdf

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Greetings,

Please distribute our attached letter to the Board of Supervisors regarding the April 4th appeal from Scott Smigel and Bruce Mackenzie, of the County Planning Commission's December 14, 2022 approval of the Highway 101 Widening Project. Segment D, Case Nos. 21DVP-00000-00022 and 21CDP-00000-0076.

Kind regards,

--
Sharon Byrne
Executive Director, Montecito Association
(805) 636-0475





The voice of our community

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To: Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors

Date: March 27, 2023

Re: Soundwall Appeals

Dear Board of Supervisors,

The Montecito Association attended the February 2022 meeting with the 101 Team regarding sound walls. We were quite surprised, as were the Flood Control personnel on the call, to learn that Caltrans would be proceeding with requesting a building permit without sound walls for the Montecito segment of the 101. We had hosted years of hearings of design reviews with the 101 team that included sound walls, and incorporated feedback on their design. This was sudden and a bit shocking. It raised a question about whether the sound walls were removed due to insufficient funding.

We conferred with Flood Control's Jon Frye, who was similarly surprised. He let us know that Flood Control had a condition that sound walls could cause no flood rise, but that he had not seen Caltrans' flood modeling data. He intended to get that data, contract with a firm to do modeling, and then see if their results matched Caltrans' conclusion, that sound walls would cause significant flood rise. He had some difficulty in obtaining that data from Caltrans, so we enlisted the aid of Senator Limon, and the data was provided.

Jon dutifully engaged a peer review with Atkins engineering, who did the FEMA mapping, Red Zone evacuation mapping, etc. When the peer review was complete, it too showed a rise in flood water from the sound walls.

The Montecito Planning Commission spent considerable time considering the project, and both Chair Pulice and Commissioner Miller tried to get at the real problem – flooding. They showed diagrams and requested drainage capacity increases to remedy the flooding problem, as well as exploring which FEMA map should be used. Commissioner Miller felt that an updated FEMA map might not show such significant flood rise. We support Commissioner Miller's thinking and recommendations on this subject. We supported the county in applying for a grant to study the expansion of floodplain drainage in the area around the 101 and we supported Supervisor Williams' calls for increased drainage capacity.

We also collected community comments on the sound walls. We found the majority of neighbors close to the freeway supported sound walls, even with a flooding possibility. Some who have resided there for decades said flooding was expected, but had increased in recent years. The feeling was maintenance of the creeks, or lack thereof, was contributing to the issue. We included comments we received from the community adjacent to the freeway for your review.

We are also keenly aware of the \$126 million in funding tied to this project on the present timeline. We've been monitoring legislation and increased pressure on the state to stop funding additional freeway widening projects, and favor multi-modal projects instead.

The Montecito Associations respectfully requests that the Board of Supervisors make every effort to ensure the ongoing questions and concerns of the community have been heard, considered, and addressed, particularly as follows:

- a. Neighbors continue to question the modeling data and assert that it may not reflect accurate and real-life conditions, sufficient to render an accurate conclusion about sound walls. Specific questions have been raised by the community related to the assumptions and presence of ring nets, debris basins and clogs.
- b. Neighbors continue to assert that the maintenance of creeks in town has deteriorated over time, and question whether the potential of increased and routine cleaning of the creeks has been properly considered in determining future flood rise and thus altering conclusions about sound walls.

We appreciate the work of the Montecito Planning Commission to push for increased drainage, and to ensure the project does not preclude sound walls, even if it will not construct them in this window. We appreciate Supervisor Williams' offer to meet with concerned residents prior to the Appeal hearing, and encouraged our members to invest the time to meet with him.

Finally, should the Board decide to grant approval of this project without inclusion of building sound walls, The Montecito Association requests that the Board grant any such approval, contingent upon a specific plan as to where and how sound walls could be added in the future.

We hope there is some compromise that can be found to reduce freeway noise for Montecito residents and yet not delay the project further, risking funding or resources presently tied to it

Sincerely,



Megan Orloff - President, Montecito Association