



San Fernando Valley Audubon Society

Incorporated as California Audubon Society 1913

For nature education and conservation of wildlife

P.O. Box 7769 Van Nuys, CA 91409-7769

June 18, 2006

Mr. Ronald Kosinski, Deputy District Director
Caltrans, District 7
Division of Environmental Planning
100 South Main Street, MS 16A
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Dear Mr. Kosinski,

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the I405/US 101 Connector Project.

We are a 2,100 member environmental organization whose mission is to protect habitat and promote wildlife education in the San Fernando Valley.

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society adamantly opposes any project that would have any adverse impact on the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve. Alternatives #2 and #3 would permanently impair the natural resources of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Refuge with noise and light pollution.

The Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve is a unique urban wildlife refuge. It shelters fine examples of riparian, grassland, and woodland habitat. Over 240 species of resident and migratory birds forage and nest in the reserve. Additionally there are outstanding communities of California native plants and insects.

Our organization gives guided nature walks in the Wildlife Reserve to students, scouting groups, and the public. In addition, colleges and private schools also bring their students to the reserve.

Annually, thousands of public school children, birdwatchers, photographers, joggers, walkers and families with small children visit the reserve, finding a nearby refuge from the hubbub of the city. Many visitors travel long distances to hear

the wind rustle through the cottonwood leaves or to marvel at a wading Great Blue Heron.

San Fernando Valley Audubon Society's outstanding Sepulveda Basin Environmental Education Program provides environmental education for 3,000 schoolchildren, many from low income homes. While at the Wildlife Reserve, children enjoy watching White Pelicans, cormorants, egrets, herons and hawks through binoculars. They study tiny plankton from the lake under microscopes and learn about native plants and animals. The trained staff introduces concepts like ecology, reclaimed water, riparian habitat and flood control.

San Fernando Valley Audubon urges that Alternatives #2 and #3 be discarded. Both of these alternatives would permanently intrude into the peace and tranquility of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve, in particular into the area near the lake where most strolls, bird walks and field trips take place. Alternative # 2 would cover or cut off 17 acres from the rest of the Wildlife Reserve with an on-ramp and an off-ramp. Alternative # 3 would cover or cut off 21.5 acres. Both alternatives would cause noise and light pollution to intrude into the heart of the Wildlife Reserve. The impact on both wildlife and human users of the refuge is grim to contemplate. After the clangor and disruptions of a long construction period, the quiet and tranquility will be forever lost to the roar of traffic.

Although Alternative #4 would avoid direct damage to the wildlife area, the impact to the Sherman Oaks Community adjacent to the freeway would be unacceptable.

My organization recommends that Caltrans adopt either Alternative #1 or the No Build Alternative. These two initiatives would have the least destructive impact on the wildlife refuge and surrounding community.

Although Alternative #1 would eliminate access to the 101 from the intersection of Burbank Blvd and the 405, the improved traffic conditions would benefit the public by enhancing safety and alleviating traffic congestion on the freeway. Under Alternative #1, motorists would still be able to access the 101 at Balboa Blvd, Hayvenhurst Ave and Van Nuys Blvd.

If traffic analyses show that Alternative #1 will increase surface street congestion to an unacceptable level, San Fernando Valley Audubon endorses the No

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Comments I-405/US-101 Connector

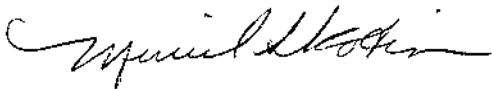
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Build Alternative. We contend that expanding the connector will not improve the flow of traffic on the heavily congested 405 and 101 freeways sufficiently to justify the destructive impacts of the other alternatives.

Should Caltrans select the No Build Alternative, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society recommends closing the Haskell Blvd exit on the northbound 101 with the purpose of improving safety and speed of traffic merging onto the northbound 101 from the southbound 405. Currently, vehicles entering the northbound 101 must share a short lane with cars exiting onto Haskell. This situation is a safety hazard and should be remedied.

In closing, we urge Caltrans to discard Alternatives #2 and #3 as these proposals would permanently impair the wildlife reserve. Our organization believes that Alternative #1 offers the best opportunities for preserving open space and valley communities and alleviating our traffic congestion problems. If Alternative #1 is not feasible, we support the No Build Alternative.

Sincerely,



Muriel S. Kotin, Youth Activities Chair
and Representative to the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee
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Cc: Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa; City Council Members Wendy Gruel, Dennis Zine, Tom LaBonge, Jack Weiss, Tony Cardenas, Alex Padilla, Greig Smith; Los Angeles County Supervisors Michael Antonovich, Zev Yaroslavsky; California State Assembly Members Keith Richman, Cindy Montanez, Lloyd Levine, Fran Pavley, Paul Koretz, Dario Frommer; California Senate Members Tom McClintock, Richard Alarcon, Jack Scott, Sheila Kuehl; US House of Representatives Howard L. Berman, Henry Waxman, Brad Sherman