

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CONSERVANCY**

RAMIREZ CANYON PARK  
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Agenda Item 12(c)  
SMMC  
2/27/12

October 15, 2010

Mr. Carlos Montes  
Division of Environmental Planning (Palo Comado/US 101 Interchange Project)  
California Department of Transportation, District 7  
100 South Main Street, Suite 100, MS 16A  
Los Angeles, California 90012

**Palo Comado/US 101 Interchange  
07-LA-101 (PM 33.0/34.4)**

Dear Mr. Montes:

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (Conservancy) is concerned about the impact of increased traffic volumes and higher vehicle speeds on wildlife crossings of U.S. 101 in Agoura Hills. This project proposes to more than double the width of the existing overpass at Palo Comado Canyon Road to facilitate easier vehicle access to the 101 Freeway. The project would also add sidewalks and bike lanes to the overcrossing. In addition to increased wildlife mortality from higher vehicle speeds, development induced by improved freeway access at this location will decrease permeability of the 101 Freeway corridor at this location. Already, recent National Parks Service research has uncovered genetic fragmentation among predator populations on both sides of the freeway. Any project that contributes to this cumulative impact of freeway corridor development must be analyzed for impacts to wildlife mobility and mitigated to a level of insignificance.

The Conservancy proposes that Caltrans mitigate impacts at Palo Comado Canyon Road by increasing permeability at the more viable Liberty Canyon Road undercrossing to the east. In particular, fencing designed to prevent wildlife and human access to the freeway is currently also inhibiting safe wildlife approach to the underpass. We request that Caltrans work with our staff to develop a mutually agreeable fencing plan that increases the potential for successful genetic exchange across the freeway. Implementation of this fencing plan should be a detailed mitigation measure, including a time frame for completion.

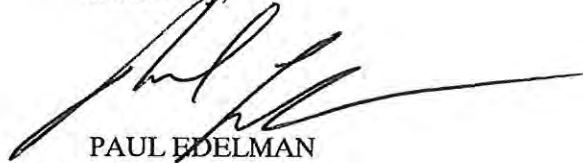
The long-term solution for addressing these issues will be a wildlife tunnel under the mainline freeway. As you may know, this structure is in the preliminary planning stage as a collaboration among Caltrans, the National Parks Service, Mountains Recreation and

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Conservation Authority, and the Conservancy. However, funding for this \$12 million improvement is not readily available. In the interim, we must maximize the utility of existing infrastructure by making the aforementioned fencing changes at minimal cost.

If you have any questions, I can be reached at (310) 589-3200, ext. 128.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Edelman', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

PAUL EDELMAN  
Deputy Director  
Natural Resources and Planning





Palo Comado Canyon Rd, Agoura Hills, CA 91301

101

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Imagery Date: Oct 23, 2007

34°08'29.74" N 118°44'15.39" W elev 937 ft

Eye alt 5009 ft