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**COUNTY OF SANTA BARBARA**

May 12, 2021

The Honorable Salud Carbajal  
 U.S. House of Representatives  
 2331 Rayburn House Office Building  
 Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Carbajal:

I am writing on behalf of the County of Santa Barbara to request that the restoration of the Highway Bridge Replacement and Rehabilitation Program (HBRRP) be a top priority for the upcoming surface transportation reauthorization bill.

Thank you for cosponsoring H.R. 1299, *the Fixing America's Bridges Act*. This bipartisan legislation would reinstate the HBRRP as a core Federal-aid Highway program and increase the federal cost share for eligible bridge projects (to 90 percent up from the typical 80 percent federal contribution).

Bridges are a unique and vital component of our nation's transportation system. Unlike most road and pavement projects, bridge projects entail complex design processes, necessitate long-term planning and procurement, and present unique construction challenges. There is little room for error when it comes to bridge safety, as they must remain structurally sound in order to ensure that vehicles and motorists are secure. If a bridge fails, the results are often catastrophic.

According to the American Road and Transportation Builders Association, seven percent of the bridges in California are classified as structurally deficient. All told, the state has identified needed repairs on 2,006 bridges at an estimated cost of \$8.8 billion. In Santa Barbara County, 68 bridges are in need of repair or replacement. Some examples of bridge projects currently in development by Santa Barbara County are:

- Bonita School Road Bridge 51C-0230 over Santa Maria River
  - Construction = \$43.2M
  - Total Project = \$51.5M
- Foothill Road Bridge 51C-0381 carrying Foothill Road
  - Construction = \$23.4M

- Total Project = \$26M
- Santa Ynez River Bridge 51C-0006 carrying Floradale Avenue (adjacent to Federal Penitentiary and Vandenberg Air Force Base)
  - Construction = \$18.8M
  - Total Project = \$21.2M
- Romero Creek Bridge 51C-0137 carrying Fernald Point Lane
  - Construction = \$3.5M
  - Total Project = \$6.1M
- Cold Springs Creek Bridge 51C-0398 carrying East Mountain Drive
  - Construction = \$4.5M
  - Total Project = 5.9M

The *FAST Act* provides a funding set-aside for locally owned bridges that are located off of the Federal-aid highway system; however, there is no dedicated funding stream for local “on-system” bridges. As a result, many local on-system bridges that are in need of repair or replacement do not receive any federal support, as they must compete with a host of other highway and transit projects for limited funds. Reestablishing the HBRRP would ensure that all locally owned bridges – both on- and off-system – would have access to additional, dedicated federal funding.

The County requests your continued support for reinstating the HBRRP as a core Federal-aid Highway program would help ensure that states and local governments have additional, dedicated funding to repair and replace deficient bridges. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,



Don Gilchrest  
Washington Representative

DWG: awg