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April 29, 2025

**VIA EMAIL**

Caltrans District 7  
100 South Main Street, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Attn: Lauren Walike, Caltrans Public Information Officer

Re: Urgent Request to Delay Commencement of I-405 Pavement Rehabilitation Project While Addressing Community's Concerns

Dear Ms. Walike:

Established in 1946, BHA is the largest homeowner association in the 90049 zip code, representing approximately 4,500 homeowners and condo residents living west of the 405, north of San Vicente Boulevard and east of Canyon View Drive. I write on behalf of BHA and its members to convey our concerns with the Interstate 405 Sepulveda Pass Pavement Rehabilitation Project ("the Project") and its considerable impact on our community after the Palisades Fire. Given that the Project will take place during the Palisades recovery effort and in a Very High Fire Hazard Severity Zone where multiple fires have occurred and required evacuation, we request the following:

1. Postpone the Project until PCH is fully open and fire debris removal is completed.
2. Require the Contractor to circulate to the City, LAFD, and Brentwood residents its emergency plan in case of fire and/or evacuation before the start of construction.
3. Establish a 24-hour phone line for the community to report traffic delays exceeding the anticipated 15 minutes and any issues requiring immediate attention.

**Without Postponement, the Project Will Impact the Recovery Effort and Burden Brentwood Streets**

While traffic on the Westside of Los Angeles has increased dramatically since the Palisades Fire, it is most deeply felt on Sunset Boulevard in the heart of BHA territory. What used to be a traffic nightmare has now become traffic hell. Why? Because thousands of commuters from the valley to the westside who used to use Topanga and PCH must now use the 101 and 405. (On the March 21 KNX Podcast LA Local, Mark Bischoff from Caltrans District 7 stated that on average 48,000 vehicles per day passed the intersection of Topanga Canyon and PCH before the closure.). The preferred access point to the 405 is Sunset Boulevard as Waze sends cars north to access the freeway, avoiding chokepoints at Olympic, Pico and Wilshire Boulevard.

Add to this the fire debris removal truck trips under the direction of the US Army Corps of Engineers, and you have traffic hell. According to Colonel Sawser of the US Army Corps of Engineers who spoke at an April 7 BHA meeting, the average daily traffic from fire debris removal on Sunset is around 500 trucks. Most of the inbound traffic occurs early morning. Fire debris removal trucks operate seven days a week from 4:30am to 10:00pm. In addition to worsening peak hour traffic, these truck trips have introduced congestion earlier in the day as they add to an already high number of vehicle trips on the road. Every on and off ramp in Brentwood will be included

in the Project and detours will burden our already overly burdened side streets. Anyone who lives or commutes in the Westside knows that a lane closure or ramp closure creates traffic, even at 10:00pm at night but especially at 8:00pm and 7:00am.

Lane closures during the recovery effort will worsen traffic in Brentwood and impede the recovery progress being made in the burn area. The hours outlined for the Project at the Caltrans meeting on April 24, beginning at 8:00pm and not opening until 7:00am, fit within the work hours of these trucks and will cause slowdowns. We ask that the Project commence AFTER PCH is fully open and the fire debris removal complete.

**Fire Risk is Real and Must Be Addressed BEFORE the Project Commences**

The Sepulveda Pass is ground zero for fires in Brentwood. BHA members have evacuated multiple times due to fires that have started on the side of the freeway in the Sepulveda Pass. (In October 2019, the Getty wildfire burned 745 acres in Brentwood. 10 homes in BHA territory were destroyed and 15 damaged. In December 2017 our members were evacuated due to the Skirball Fire and again this year during the Palisades Fire.) During the Palisades Fire when we were already evacuated a fire broke out near Moraga and Sepulveda. Our latest experience with the Palisades Fire has taught us that we cannot assume the Contractor will be prepared or that residents will know what to do. It is imperative that an LAFD approved emergency plan for fire evacuation be disseminated prior to construction. In addition, we would hope that Caltrans, as the agency with supervising authority over the Contractor, will make sure that all necessary precautions are taken to prevent fire in a very high fire zone from the construction activity and that fire officials and experts in the field of fire risk mitigation are consulted.

**Hotline for Real Time Problems Communicated in Real Time**

We appreciate Caltrans' commitment to keep delays to 15 minutes with a request to report any issue that results in a 30-minute delay. However, asking motorists and residents to email a service center that is only open during the week outside of the project hours is unrealistic and does not address the potential problem. The construction will be occurring over four years while three major events are occurring—the World Cup, the Super Bowl and the Olympics. It will be on the main route from the valley to LAX. It does not seem unreasonable to have a 24-hour hotline.

I urge Caltrans to accommodate our requests. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Thelma Waxman*

Thelma Waxman  
President

cc: Ben Allen, California State Senator, 24<sup>th</sup> Senate District  
Karen Bass, Mayor, Los Angeles  
Lindsay Horvath, LA County Supervisor, 3<sup>rd</sup> District  
Jacqui Irwin, California Assemblymember, 42<sup>nd</sup> District  
Traci Park, Councilwoman, Council District 11  
Tony Tavares, Director, Caltrans