



**MENDOCINO
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

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MCOG Agrees to Share in Added Costs of Willits Bypass

At its meeting Monday, December 1, the Mendocino Council of Governments unanimously approved Caltrans' request to commit a share of funds to cover increased costs to complete construction of the U.S. 101 Bypass of Willits project. MCOG's share, at the long-established rate of 15 percent, is approximately \$9,705,000.

With all members present the Council deliberated, and heard several public comments, for over 90 minutes before taking action. Caltrans District 1 Director Charlie Fielder answered numerous questions. It was generally agreed that this was a tough decision made at the expense of other planned projects in Mendocino County; however, the magnitude of the issue and the Council's long standing commitment outweighed other options.

Caltrans will request an allocation of \$55 million from the California Transportation Commission (CTC) at its December 10 meeting in Riverside. This amount is intended to cover remaining construction costs to project completion. The projected shortfall was calculated based on statistical analysis in a Risk Management Plan prepared by Caltrans. All available contingency funds have been expended. Cost increases are a result of various factors including delays, lawsuits, protests, CHP enforcement, and environmental requirements, as well as change orders that are typical of any large construction project.

"Early on there was a strong commitment to getting this project done and that hasn't wavered," said 3rd District Supervisor John Pinches. "We as a Council need to support it—the representatives of the County and four cities agree, even if it means putting off other projects. We are partners with Caltrans and should honor that. It's important to send a strong message to the CTC."

Further details are available at www.mendocinocog.org, under Meetings, in MCOG's agenda packet of December 1.

MCOG formed as a joint powers agreement in 1972, as mandated by state law, to disburse state and federal funds for transportation, to provide regional planning, and to serve as a regional forum. MCOG is overseen by a board consisting of two county supervisors, a countywide public appointee, and one council member from each of the four incorporated cities. For more information, call the MCOG office at 463-1859 or consult the agency's web site.

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