

October 23, 2014

Betty Jean Spitze, President
Sierra Gateway Trust
P. O. Box 508
Sanger, CA 93657

Dear Ms. Spitze:

Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG) supports the efforts of the County of Fresno and Sierra Gateway Trust, Inc. to obtain a California State Scenic Highway designation for portions of State Route 180 (60.7 miles) from Trimmer Springs Rd. to the Tulare County Line and from SR 180 from Kings Canyon National Park boundary near General Grant Grove to Kings Canyon National Park boundary near Cedar Grove.

The State legislature, SB 1467 (Farr, 1963), established the California Scenic Highway Program through which certain portions of the state highway system could be designated as scenic as a way to establish the state's responsibility for the protection of California's natural scenic beauty. This was to be accomplished by identifying portions of the state highway system that together with the adjacent scenic corridors, require special scenic conservation treatment. The legislation further declared the state's intent to assign responsibility for the development of scenic highways to local jurisdictions.

State Route 180 is Fresno County's only major access to Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. In recognition of this and the scenic quality of this road, in 1976, the Fresno County General Plan designated as a Scenic Highway the two segments listed of the SR 180 in the eastern portion of the County. The designation was carried forward through the adoption of the 2000 General Plan Update while also including policies that indicated working with Caltrans the pursuit of scenic highway designation from the State of California for the State highway segments eligible for such designation.

As part of the designation process, land protection measures are required in the form of ordinances, zoning, and/or planning policies for the area. However, this area already has adequate protection policies in place as was incorporated in the County's General Plan; therefore, the County is not proposing any land use regulation changes with this action.

Fresno COG supports the efforts of the County of Fresno and the Sierra Gateway Trust in activities such as the Scenic Highway and maintaining a site on the Sierra-Nevada Alliance-National Geographic Geotourism Map which enhances the efforts to promote the local area on a national level. There continues to be many projects funded and implemented through Fresno

City of Clovis
City of Coalinga
City of Firebaugh
City of Fowler
City of Fresno
City of Huron
City of Kerman
City of Kingsburg
City of Mendota
City of Orange Cove
City of Parlier
City of Reedley
City of San Joaquin
City of Sanger
City of Selma
County of Fresno

COG, Caltrans, and Measure C along SR 180 with the purpose of providing improved east-west route continuity between the East and West side Fresno County communities. Expansion projects along SR 180 have helped and continue to help reduce traffic congestion thereby improving travel time and motorist safety. They enhance the economic development of eastern and western Fresno County in the transporting of local grown goods from farm to market. Just recently, Fresno COG, along with the Air District, funded two pilot transit projects that will provide public transit to our national parks. These projects consist of one from Fresno to Yosemite and the other from Fresno-Sanger-Sequoia-Kings Canyon. These transit projects will help reduce congestion and greenhouse gas emissions while providing a fixed route transit service to the national parks.

We hope to soon see the section referenced here of SR 180 designated as a Scenic Highway and look forward to the placement of official signs along the highway as a symbol of its protected status.

Respectfully,

Amarpreet Dhaliwal, Chairman
Mayor, City of San Joaquin

Support for State Route 180 State Scenic Highway Designation

Letter of Intent Fresno County Board of Supervisors (November 12, 2013)

Other letters of Support as of 9/15/14

City of Sanger
Department of Interior National Parks Service
El Rio Reyes
Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain, Inc.
Greater Reedley Chamber of Commerce
Hudson Farms
McDonald, Peter; Dean Library Services, Fresno State
Minkler Cash Store
Resource Management Agency, Tulare County
Sanger District Chamber of Commerce
Sanger Rotary Club
Traditional Choinumni Tribe
United States Department of Agriculture Forest service
Wilsonia Historic District Trust
Wonder Valley Ranch Resort and Conference Center
A former Board of Supervisors Chairman (Waterson)