

## California Department of Transportation

DISTRICT 3  
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[www.dot.ca.gov](http://www.dot.ca.gov)



April 27, 2021

Mrs. Lorna Dobrovolny  
President, American River Community Coalition  
PO Box 33  
Cool, CA 95614

Dear Mrs. Dobrovolny:

Thank you for your April 8, 2021 letter alerting us of your concerns related to traffic hazards along State Route (SR) 49 at the American River Confluence. The pandemic continues to contribute to unprecedented crowding at our State Recreational Areas (SRA) everywhere as people seek relief as a safer alternative to recreate. Safe access to these recreational areas is an equity issue the department supports.

Your letter states two primary concerns for this area: Pedestrian/vehicle interactions and evacuation due to wildfire. We take traffic safety and wildfire danger very seriously.

The collision history for the last 5 years showed that there were no fatalities and pedestrians were not involved in any of the collisions. We know that when maintenance forces temporarily closed the shoulder due to COVID restrictions, visitors parked farther southeast, where the shoulder area is reduced or non-existing (encroaching on the highway), and walked along the highway, being exposed to traffic for a longer period. To help mitigate this concern, we installed no parking signs where the shoulder area is reduced or non-existing. Working with our CHP partners they are stepping up enforcement along the highway in this area to ensure the highway remains operational.

We will further monitor the collision history of this area and look for opportunities to raise awareness of drivers to changing roadway conditions. This may include the following near-term treatments:

- Enhance signs by enlarging and/or upgrading to Type XI retroreflective sheeting
- Upgrade and refresh existing striping
- Install or refresh pavement markers/reflectors
- Reduce foliage growth where appropriate

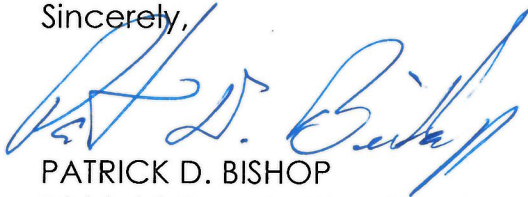
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- Working with our partners, install signage alerting drivers to parking located east along Old Forest Hill Road that can accommodate more visitors and access points to this SRA

Wildfire danger is a real concern and the department is taking steps to address this issue head on. In addition to typical maintenance activities such as mowing and applying pre-emergent herbicides, we are aggressively working to reduce ladder fuels in your area through Hazard Mitigation Grants and Caltrans maintenance roadside crews. We coordinate with our emergency responders regularly and our maintenance forces are always ready to assist incident commanders in the event of a route evacuation.

We look forward to working with our county and coalition partners to discuss longer-term alternatives. Feel free to contact Brian Alconcel, Chief of Traffic Operations, at (916) 802-9386 to discuss further. Also, please call me any time to share your concerns or items of mutual interest.

Sincerely,



PATRICK D. BISHOP  
District 3 Deputy Director of  
Maintenance and Traffic Operations

cc: US Congressman Tom McClintock  
CA Senator Brian Dahle  
CA Assembly Member Frank Bigelow  
El Dorado County Supervisor Lori Parlin  
Placer County Supervisor Cindy Gustafson  
Auburn City Councilwoman Alice Dowdin Calvillo  
CalFire NEU Chief Brian Estes  
CalFire Amador/El Dorado Unit Chief Mike Blankenheim  
Forest Hill Fire District Chief Mike Ridley  
Georgetown Fire Protection District Chief Glenn Brown  
Eldorado County Fire District Chief Tim Cordero  
Auburn Fire Department Chief Dave Spencer  
State Parks & Recreation Planning Unit Alexandra Stehl  
State Parks Superintendent Mike Howard