



FIGURE I

Riverside County - Orange County MIS

Riverside County - Orange County MIS Study Areas

NO SCALE
SOURCE: Austin-Foust Associates, Inc.

I:\CV431\GRC_OC_MIS.cdr (10/27/04)



State of California - The Resources Agency

Arnold Schwarzenegger, Governor

DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Inland Empire District
17801 Lake Perris Drive
Perris, CA 92571
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<http://www.parks.ca.gov>

Ruth Coleman, Director

October 19, 2004

Eric Haley, Executive Director
Riverside County Transportation Commission
3560 University Avenue, Suite 100
Riverside, CA 92501

Re: Riverside to Orange County Connection "Prado Expressway Conceptual Alternative"

Dear Mr. Haley:

At the Project Development Team meeting of October 6, 2004, a conceptual transportation corridor alternative was presented that appeared to divide Chino Hills State Park north of SR-91 and west of SR-71. Any alignment crossing Chino Hills State Park is not an environmentally superior alternative. In fact, the Prado Expressway alternative is outside the study area identified for the Major Investment Study. The existing study area should be maintained and conceptual alternatives beyond those boundaries should not be considered.

As we have previously stated to the Southern California Association of Governments, the Four Corners Transportation Group, the Orange County Transportation Authority, and the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC), an alternative of this nature is unacceptable and must be removed from consideration (see attached letters). Conceptual alternatives dividing Chino Hills State Park have been previously eliminated from SCAG's Regional Transportation Plan, the Four Corners' transportation plans and other planning efforts due to overwhelming public opposition and unacceptable environmental impacts from a road through Chino Hills State Park.

As you know, the Coal Canyon on- and off-ramps were eliminated in 2002 as a stage in improving wildlife movement from the Cleveland National Forest to the Puerco-Chino Hills. The Southwest Ecoregion, which includes Chino Hills State Park, the Cleveland National Forest, and other protected lands in the area, contains resources of worldwide significance. No other region in the United States of comparable size contains as much biodiversity. The area cannot sustain a substantial loss and fragmentation of its remaining habitat if it is to remain viable in the long-term. Already the public, through the State of California and local entities, has invested hundreds of millions of dollars to preserve Chino Hills State Park and all of its resources. We encourage continued exploration of environmentally friendly transportation alternatives and strategies which protect established nature reserves.

Please include California State Parks as an invited participant in all future meetings related to the Riverside to Orange County Connection. We will be helpful and active participants in helping develop alternatives that will help protect State Park resources.

Mr. Eric Haley
Prado Expressway Conceptual Alternative-Riverside to Orange County Connection
October 19, 2004
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Again, any proposal which traverses a State Park is not a realistic option for consideration to resolve regional traffic problems. Thank you for your serious consideration. Please call me at (951) 443-2423 if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,



Gary Watts
District Superintendent

enclosures: May 2, 2000 letter to RCTC
April 30, 1999 letter to SCAG
December 28, 1998 letter to OCTA
March 8, 1998 letter to SCAG

cc: Rick Rayburn, State Parks
K. Siegel, Center for Biological Diversity
Nancy Ferguson, USFWS
Judi Tamasi, WCCA