



December 4th, 2023

Rachel Carpenter
Chief Safety Officer
California Department of Transportation

Dear Ms. Carpenter,

We are writing to request your assistance in responding to a fatal tragedy in our community that took place on the Pacific Coast Highway (State Route 1, PCH). As you are aware, on the evening of October 17th a high speed crash killed four pedestrians in the City of Malibu. This incident was the result of excessive speeding, 104 mph in a 45 mph zone of PCH, which has long been a distressingly common occurrence for this stretch of scenic highway.

For years, residents of Malibu have had to witness, endure, and bury the dead from high speed crashes along PCH. For years, residents have called upon city, county, and state officials to make changes to how PCH is patrolled and designed to increase the safety of those living and traveling along the Malibu corridor. For years, residents have seen little change with studies, reports, and recommendations rarely translating into physical changes to PCH. Understandably, their patience has run out, as have ours as their representative in the State Legislature.

CalTrans District 7 staff recently sent us a draft copy of a Director's Update that included a list of proposed "Short Term Improvements" to PCH (*attached*). These improvements include optical speed bars, speed feedback signs, enhanced striping, and road signs which are estimated to cost \$2.25 million. We request that you work with your colleagues and the Director to finalize this list of "Short Term Improvements", identify timelines for each project to be completed, and identify any existing funds and funding shortfalls.

We also request CalTrans provide us with a list of the five most impactful safety modifications that could be made in the intermediate to long term to the Malibu section of PCH to prevent excessive speeding and preserve both pedestrian and motorist lives. We understand that in the area of traffic engineering not every solution in the CalTrans toolbox may be appropriate, so we look to your expertise to help focus and fast track efforts to make improvements to PCH and save lives.

In making your recommendations, we request that you review the 2015 Pacific Coast Highway Safety Study prepared by the consulting firm Stantec for the City of Malibu and the Southern California Association of Governments. While not a CalTrans initiated study, CalTrans participated in its Project Steering Committee and many of its recommendations remain unfulfilled and seem highly relevant to producing effective safety improvements.

We stand ready as Legislators to assist CalTrans and the Administration in securing resources to ensure that short term improvements can be made in the coming year and prevent the ever-growing graveyard that is PCH.

But we, as well as the residents of Malibu, will no longer tolerate unnecessary bureaucratic delays. If an underpass fire that burned pallets and abandoned cars can bring together the collective forces of CalTrans to turn a 5-week project into a re-opening in a matter of days, the death of 4 young women should be able to move the Santa Monica Mountains.

Sincerely,



JACQUI IRWIN
Assemblymember, 42nd District



BEN ALLEN
Senator, 24th District

cc:

Tony Tavares, Director, CalTrans

Toks Omishakin, Secretary, CalSTA

James Hacker, Deputy Cabinet Secretary

Ronda Paschal, Deputy Legislative Secretary

Farra Bracht, Chief Consultant, Assembly Committee on Transportation

Randy Chinn, Chief Consultant, Senate Committee on Transportation

Genevieve Morelos, Consultant, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 4 Climate, Crisis, Resources, Energy and Transportation

Eunice Roh, Consultant, Senate Budget Subcommittee No. 5 on Public Safety, the Judiciary, Labor and Transportation