

# COUNTY OF NEVADA

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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Julie Patterson Hunter,  
Clerk of the Board

## NEVADA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

### Board Agenda Memo

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**MEETING DATE:** November 7, 2017

**TO:** Board of Supervisors

**FROM:** Julie Patterson Hunter, Clerk of the Board

**SUBJECT:** Resolution in Support of the Scenic and Historic Values of State Highway 174 and requesting the California Department of Transportation to re-evaluate the State Highway 174 Realignment Project including the Project's Federal Highway Administration's Category Classification, use of Negative Declaration, use of 3 years of data for the Project's justification, use of other FHWA safety countermeasures, and use of community engagement strategies such as road safety audits and local road safety plans.

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**RECOMMENDATION:** Adopt the attached Resolution.

**FUNDING:** Not Applicable.

**BACKGROUND:**

On October 24, 2017 the Board of Supervisors heard presentations from both Caltrans and Save Highway 174 on the Caltrans safety improvement project on State Route (SR) 174 that will realign several curves, widen shoulders, add a southbound left-turn pocket at Greenhorn Access Road intersection, and widen the Clear Recovery Zone (CRZ) on SR 174 from Maple Way to You Bet Road, post mile (PM) 2.7 to PM 4.6 in Nevada County. Caltrans is applying an adaptive solution, instead of Caltrans Highway Design Manual – Full Standard Solution that includes adaptive horizontal curves, adaptive vertical curves, a 2:1 CRZ slopes, 45 mph speed limits and up to 20' CRZ. Caltrans outlined the project impacts which include but are not limited to a) 49 parcels being affected by a Right of Way Acquisition; b) approximately 1,700 trees being removed; c) utility infrastructure relocation; d) the development of pedestrian and bicyclist friendly environments; e) new vehicle recovery roadways spaces; f) increased visibility around curves; g) fewer collisions; and h) fewer accidents and fatalities.

Moreover, Save Highway 174 community group that consists of 150 plus affected property owners, residents and citizens of Nevada County outlined their concerns with the current design standard for the project that include but are not limited to a) the project's initial FHWA's Type III classification which allowed for a Negative Declaration to be used instead of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR), which would have required alternative options, and a traffic and noise study to be conducted; b) a lack of public involvement, transparency and responsiveness; c) use of limited 3 year data period (2010-2013) with 3 fatalities while data collisions from a 12.5 year

period (2005-2017) had the same number of fatalities; c) Caltrans only relied on 1 design feature from FHWA's list of Safety Countermeasures, which is not a required countermeasure; d) when compared to other roads within the County, Highway 174 collision data is not above average; and e) Caltrans did not utilize a Road Safety Audit or Local Road Safety Plan. The group also suggested that 1) Caltrans reassess and revise the project by re-examining the safety data and verifying its safety statistics; 2) actively engage with community over options on how to make the road safer; 3) consider scenic and historic resources as important values in the project's design; 4) utilize and evaluate all options offered by FHWA Safety Countermeasures; and 4) conduct a phased or interim approach to the project. Moreover, the group also requested that the Board adopt a Resolution in support of Save Highway 174's concerns over the project.

Subsequently, the Board directed Staff in two ways. First Staff shall work with Supervisor Hall on identifying and taking the next steps necessary for the Highway to be designated as a State Scenic Highway. Second, Staff shall draft a Resolution for the Board to consider for adoption that outlines the Board's concerns over the project.

Therefore please find attached the Resolution

**Item Initiated by:** Jeffrey Thorsby, Senior Administrative Analyst

**Approved by:** Julie Patterson Hunter, Clerk of the Board