

California State Senate

SENATOR MIKE MCGUIRE

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA'S SECOND SENATE DISTRICT



September 1, 2017

Malcolm Dougherty
Director
California Department of Transportation
1120 N Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Director Dougherty,

It has been an absolute pleasure to work with you on fixing our state's crumbling infrastructure. I appreciate the efforts you and your staff are making on a daily basis to make our roads safer, smoother and more reliable for all Californians.

I wanted to reach out to you today as Chairman of the Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture about improving habitat for California's fish. I am corresponding with you to determine how we can expedite projects to improve fish passage at road crossings.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) continues to improve upon past efforts but some biologically important locations have been waiting on the priority list for years without movement. I would like to explore how Caltrans can remediate more fish passage barriers that are biological priorities where there may be no urgent transportation need, per SB 857 (Kuehl, 2005).

Additionally, I'd like to know what can be done to focus on fully remediating barriers rather than implementing hydraulic solutions (retrofits) that are still a partial barrier to threatened and endangered species of fish. Retrofits defer maintenance and future replacement of the barrier, which increases the cost when the location is fully spanned or remediated as per SB 857. This approach may be penny wise but pound foolish and often does not completely solve the problem.

I understand that AB 96 (Committee Budget trailer bill, 2015) required Caltrans to commit \$5 million per year toward funding high priority fish barriers and I would like to get a better understanding on how those funds were expended and if Caltrans can commit to increasing this amount as it will currently only fund a couple of locations throughout the State. In Washington, the Department of Transportation has committed to funding 40 of 800 locations per year. I would like know if Caltrans can commit to funding projects at least equal to or more than in the last Caltrans "Fish Passage Annual Report to the California State Legislature".

I would love to get together to discuss potential strategy and funding to address these challenges. Jenna VonEsmarch, Scheduling Manger, will be reaching out to schedule a time to get together.

Thanks again for all of your hard work and for your time and attention on this important issue.

Warmest regards,

MIKE MCGUIRE
Chair, Joint Committee on Fisheries and Aquaculture

Look forward
to getting together
Thank you!