



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mid County Parkway Upheld by Federal Court

In a win for the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), United States District Judge George Wu has rejected a legal challenge filed against the Mid County Parkway Project under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

The Mid County Parkway project is a proposed east-west, 16-mile highway corridor linking Perris and San Jacinto between Interstate 215 and State Route 79. A joint Environmental Impact Report/Statement analyzing the Project under both NEPA and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was prepared for the project as part of a multi-year study, public outreach, and analysis process involving federal, tribal, state, and local stakeholders. Following certification of the EIR/EIS by RCTC as the CEQA lead agency and the FHWA as NEPA lead agency, legal challenges were filed in both state and federal courts by the Center for Biological Diversity, Sierra Club, Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley and the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society. The federal litigation has now been resolved, resulting in the EIR/EIS being upheld in its entirety under NEPA.

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“This is an important legal victory for advancing a transportation project that Riverside County residents need and are asking for,” said RCTC Chairman John F. Tavaglione, who is also chairman of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. “Protecting the environment while addressing Riverside County’s transportation needs is at the core of what RCTC does, and this ruling proves we have done that on Mid County Parkway.”

The judge rejected the plaintiffs’ contention that the EIR/S contained a deficient description of the project route and failed to fully consider a sufficient range of project alternatives. The judge also found that the plaintiffs had failed to exhaust their administrative remedies in challenging the project.

The project still faces an ongoing California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) challenge in state court, filed by the same plaintiffs. A court hearing in Riverside is scheduled for June 19 before Hon. Sharon J. Waters.

Mid County Parkway is included in the plan approved by more than two-thirds of Riverside County voters through Measure A, a half-cent sales tax that was renewed in 2002. “We have been exceptionally diligent in complying with state and federal requirements and being responsible stewards of the taxpayers’ dollars. We know how important Mid County Parkway is for Riverside County’s future,” said Tavaglione.

For more information on the Mid County Parkway project, please visit <http://www.midcountyparkway.org>.