



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Mid County Parkway Turns Back CEQA Challenge

Riverside County Superior Court Judge Sharon Waters has ruled in favor of the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) and rejected a legal challenge filed against the Mid County Parkway Project and its Environmental Impact Report under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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. RCTC certified an Environmental Impact Report for the project in 2016, and was promptly challenged in state and federal court by the Center for Biological Diversity, Friends of Riverside's Hills, Sierra Club, Friends of the Northern San Jacinto Valley and the San Bernardino Valley Audubon Society.

The judge rejected the plaintiffs' contention that the environmental document contained a number of deficiencies and had failed to adopt greenhouse gas

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emission mitigation measures. The judge also found that the plaintiffs had failed to exhaust their administrative alternatives as to certain challenges to the project.

“This is an important legal victory in advancing a needed transportation project for Riverside County,” said RCTC Chairman John F. Tavaglione, who is also a member of the Riverside County Board of Supervisors. “We have made a concerted effort to develop a project that meets future transportation needs while protecting the environment and this ruling proves that.”

“We have been exceptionally diligent in complying with state and federal requirements and we know how important and useful this project is for Riverside County,” said Riverside County Supervisor and RCTC Commissioner Marion Ashley. “We have prevailed in two courts, so it’s time to move forward on a project that will serve thousands of Riverside County residents and attract new employers to the area.”

The plaintiffs in this case have the opportunity to appeal this ruling. In May, RCTC turned back a legal challenge in federal court filed by the same plaintiffs. Some of the same plaintiffs have also filed suit to stop the SR 60 Truck Climbing Lane project. The truck climbing lane project will provide critical safety improvements in the area known as the Badlands. That case will be heard in 2018.

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