



NEWS RELEASE

Date March 22, 2018
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For immediate release

RCTC receives \$50 million in state funding to begin environmental studies for I-15 Express Lanes from Corona to Lake Elsinore

The California Transportation Commission (CTC) yesterday approved \$50 million in state funding to the Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) to begin environmental studies to extend the Interstate 15 Express Lanes from Cajalco Road in Corona to State Route 74 in Lake Elsinore.

The State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) funds will allow an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement to be prepared for this proposed new 15-mile segment. Construction is under way now on a 15-mile segment of the I-15 Express Lanes from Cajalco Road to State Route 60.

"This is a great first step in the process of removing the traffic bottlenecks in the Temescal Valley and throughout the 15 corridor," said Riverside County Supervisor Kevin Jeffries. "Local residents are begging for solutions, and while the project still has a long way to go, this is a nice show of good faith from RCTC and the California Transportation Commission."

"Residents in Temescal Valley, Lake Elsinore, and southwest Riverside County endure significant congestion on I-15," said RCTC Executive Director Anne Mayer. "We have listened to the community and are prioritizing this segment for relief. We are grateful the State is partnering with us to get this project moving."

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The \$50 million set-aside for I-15 yesterday is contingent upon California's recently-enacted gas tax remaining in place. Currently, efforts are underway to qualify an initiative to repeal the tax. RCTC will wait until the fate of the tax is known before issuing a contract to begin work on this project.

The environmental process will take approximately five years, due to the complexity of the project corridor, which crosses multiple jurisdictions, freeway interchanges and waterways.

The state agency also approved funding for the following Riverside County projects:

- Interstate 15 French Valley Parkway Interchange, Temecula, \$47.6 million. Funding in the amount of \$32 million had been removed in the 2016 State Transportation Improvement Program, due to reduced revenue projections at the state level. New gasoline tax revenue has allowed these funds to be reinstated so the project can move forward.
- Interstate 15 Railroad Canyon Interchange, Lake Elsinore, \$2.9 million. Programming funds for new projects was disallowed in the 2016 STIP due to reduced revenue. This approval reinstates the 2016 funding commitment and will allow construction to start in the near future. RCTC is also seeking competitive dollars from state gas taxes to secure all necessary funds to complete this critical project for the City of Lake Elsinore.
- CV Link, Coachella Valley, \$20.6 million. The CV Link Project is a planned 40-mile active and alternative transportation pathway for pedestrians, bicyclists and low-speed electric vehicles that runs parallel to Highway 111. The first segment of CV Link opened in February.
- Avenue 66 Grade Separation Project, Mecca, \$6.13 million. The Avenue 66 project will separate Union Pacific freight trains from roadway motorists by building a two-lane bypass road over the railroad tracks.

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