



News from Congressman

Tom Lantos

**12th Congressional District of California
San Mateo/San Francisco**

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FOR INFORMATION CALL

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Light at the End of the Tunnel for Devil's Slide A Long-Time Effort Produces Long-Term Benefits

Washington, DC – Congressman Tom Lantos (D-San Mateo/San Francisco) today said he is deeply gratified that the years-long effort to build a tunnel along the coastal Devil's Slide area has advanced one step closer to fruition with the approval of the plan by state authorities.

"The Devil's Slide Tunnel has been a long time coming," Lantos said, "but there's light at the end of the tunnel now that Sacramento has signed off on the plan. And those who travel Highway 1 every day, as well as those passing through on our nation's great scenic coastal byway, will benefit greatly."

Devil's Slide is the steeply eroding coastal ridge between Pacifica and Half Moon Bay that includes a portion of Pacific Highway 1. Landslides, rockslides, and mudslides have severed this transportation artery many times since its construction in 1937. In 1995 the road was closed for 150 days.

As a Member of Congress in the early 1980's, Lantos sought a solution for this chronic impasse as the area was closed for several months due to damage from El Niño. Lantos brought a subcommittee of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure to the region for hearings and a first-hand look. This led to an initial \$50 million in federal funds to make an alternative road project a reality. After studies showed that an above-ground bypass would not adequately protect the watersheds, wildlife, and scenic beauty of the site, a consensus developed around a double bore tunnel plan, which was affirmed by a ballot initiative in 1996 that garnered 71% of the vote.

In 1998, Lantos included a provision in the Transportation Equity Act to ensure that the Devil's Slide project remained eligible for the federal funding he had worked to obtain. And Lantos legislation now pending in Congress would put the land adjacent to the tunnel under the protection of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

"Local environmental concerns and state political support are key aspects of the Devil's Slide bypass project," Lantos noted. "But without federal support, the whole thing would still be a merely matter of discussion. I am pleased to see that actions taken at all levels of government will soon produce a useful and lasting transportation solution for our region."

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