

## Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS  
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: May 7, 2013

Reference No.: 2.3b.(2)  
Action item

From: NORMA ORTEGA  
Chief Financial Officer

Prepared by: Terry L. Abbott  
Chief  
Division of Design

Subject: **NEW PUBLIC ROAD CONNECTIONS, 6-KER-14 PM 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2  
RESOLUTION S-757**

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the California Transportation Commission (Commission) approve the attached resolution S-757 and map authorizing new public road connections to State Route (SR) 14 (five locations) from new frontage roads at approximate Post Miles (PM) 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2. These new connections are located between 1.1 miles north of Redrock Inyokern Road and 1.4 miles north of SR 178 East Junction in Kern County.

### **ISSUE:**

The County of Kern has requested approval of five new public road connections to SR 14. Pursuant to Section 100.2 of the Streets and Highways Code, no local road shall be connected with any freeway or controlled access highway until the Commission adopts a resolution consenting thereto. It is recommended that the Commission approve the resolution in accordance with the recommendation of the Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of the five new public road connections to SR 14 in the county of Kern at approximate PM 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2.

Recommended by: KARLA SUTLIFF  
Chief Engineer

**BACKGROUND:**

Due to operational and safety concerns near and north of the unincorporated community of Cantil, the Department is proposing improvements to SR 14 from 1.1 miles north of Redrock Inyokern Road to 1.4 miles north of SR 178 East Junction just south of the unincorporated rural community of Indian Wells (PM 46.2 to 62.0) within Kern County. This project, referred to as the Freeman Gulch Four-Lane project, would include construction of frontage roads and new connections to SR 14 at five locations. These new public road connections are needed to provide access to clusters of private parcels on both sides of SR 14 at each location. The ultimate facility will be a four-lane divided controlled access highway with increased capacity and improved operations and safety.

SR 14 traverses Los Angeles and Kern Counties and is included in the California Freeway and Expressway System. It is functionally classified as a Rural Principal Arterial and is also included in the State Scenic Highway Master Plan north of Mojave. Through Kern County, SR 14 provides access to the communities of Mojave, California City, Inyokern, and Ridgecrest in addition to several other smaller rural communities. SR 14 connecting to SR 178 is the primary access to the Naval Air Weapons Station at China Lake in Ridgecrest, and SR 14 connecting to SR 58 provides the primary access to Edwards Air Force Base. The route facilitates the movement of goods and resources, services and employment within Kern County and to Mono County and Inyo County.

SR 14 carries a high percentage of interstate travelers and about 21 percent of the Annual Average Daily Traffic consists of trucks. SR 14 north of Mojave is included in the Subsystem of Highways for the Movement of Extra Legal Permit Loads (SHELL), and is designated as part of the national network for larger trucks under the Federal Surface Transportation Assistance Act (STAA). This route is part of the National Highway System and is a High Emphasis Route in the Inter-Regional Road System.

SR 14 within the project limits is an undivided two-lane conventional highway, whereas the portions directly south and north are four-lane controlled access highways (expressways). The Department is proposing to convert the existing SR 14 within the project limits to a multilane expressway and provide route continuity with the existing expressway at each end of the project limits. The proposed highway improvements also include construction of frontage roads and new connections to SR 14 at five locations. These new connections are required to provide access to clusters of private parcels and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) public dirt roads. Currently, there are many private parcels connecting directly to the highway via driveways. These private parcels do not have access to any other local roads. Additionally, there are a number of BLM public dirt roads, used for recreational purposes, which also have direct access

to both directions of the highway. As a result of the controlled access highway project proposal, the BLM roads will be modified to connect to the frontage roads and this way continue to have access to SR 14. The proposed reduced number of access points to the highway would improve traffic operations and enhance traffic safety along SR 14 and at the SR 178 east and west junctions.

The Freeman Gulch Four-Lane project, consisting of a conversion to a four-lane expressway with a wide median, has been planned with the approval of a project study report in 2001. The project report was approved on October 29, 2007 and the Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration/Environmental Assessment with Finding of No Significance Impact was approved on October 3, 2007. A supplemental project report that split the project into three segments was approved on April 12, 2010. The northern segment of this project, which extends from 0.5 miles north of the SR 178 West junction to 1.7 miles north of SR 178 East junction (PM 58.2 to 62.3), is the first segment proposed to be constructed and programmed for construction capital.

The need and purpose for this project addresses lack of capacity, increasing safety concerns, and the lack of continuity. Significant development is occurring at both ends of the SR 14/US 395 corridors resulting in increased traffic volume. SR 14 is currently operating at a Level of Service (LOS) of C within the project limits and if no improvements are made to this segment, the LOS is projected to worsen. The concept (20 year) LOS for this route is a LOS B. With regard to safety, increased traffic has increased the potential for high-speed accidents along mainline SR 14 caused primarily by vehicles attempting to turn onto SR 14, from the East and West SR 178 connections, with insufficient clear distance and are struck by higher speed through traffic. Increased traffic and the lack of a passing lane can be expected to contribute to increased head-on type accidents as well. Finally, the conversion to a four-lane expressway is also needed to achieve route continuity and match the existing four-lane facility that runs throughout the rest of the route.

Involvement of the local rural community, City of Ridgecrest, Kern County, and Kern Council of Governments has been essential in developing the project. During the development of the project report and Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND) the Department worked closely with the public entities and general public to evaluate alternatives. The Draft ISMND was released for public review during 2006. An opportunity for a public hearing was provided but through the Department's efforts in resolving a few public comments no public hearing was necessary.

Following the completion of this project, SR 14 will be a continuous 4-lane expressway along its entire length from its beginning at Interstate 5 in Los Angeles County through Kern County and along US 395 up to near Olancho in Inyo County (a distance of 150 miles).

A Controlled Access Highway Agreement (CAHA) was signed by the County on April 16, 2013 and will be executed by the Department after Commission approval of the new public road connections. The CAHA clearly identifies the proposed frontage roads and the five new public road connections to SR 14 at PM 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2. Though BLM is not a signatory to the CAHA, the Department has coordinated with the federal agency to develop a general agreement on the proposed modifications and access to their public dirt roads.

This request to the Commission is for the approval of the new public road connections to SR 14 at five locations within the Freeman Gulch Four-Lane project limits. The approval will allow the Department to execute the CAHA with Kern County. The ISMND for consideration of future funding for the project was approved by the Commission at the April 25, 2012 meeting.

Attachments:

Resolution S-757

Location Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
Resolution Authorizing a New Public Road Connection**

**6-Ker-14 PM 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2**

**Resolution S-757**

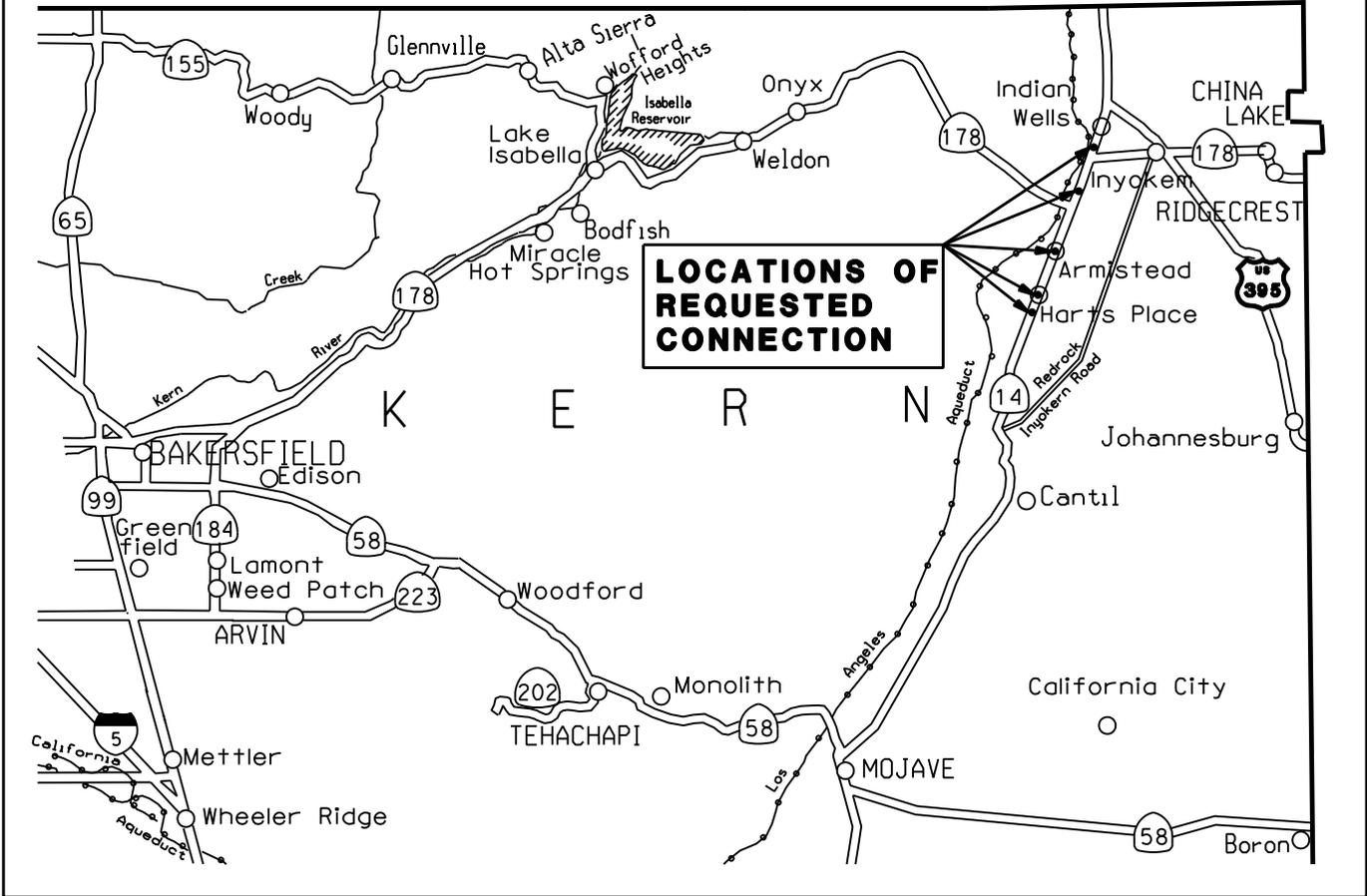
**WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation and Kern County jointly request approval of new public road connections to State Route 14 (five locations) from new frontage roads at approximate Post Miles (PM) 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2; and

**WHEREAS**, the Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration was approved on October 3, 2007, in compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act; and

**WHEREAS**, the project report was approved on October 29, 2007, and a supplemental project report was approved on April 12, 2010; and

**WHEREAS**, the project will have impacts on the environment that will be mitigated.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the California Transportation Commission that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby authorize five new public road connections to State Route 14 at new frontage roads at approximate PM 48.9, 50.2, 53.5, 58.9 and 61.2, in the county of Kern.



**NEW PUBLIC  
ROAD CONNECTION  
LOCATION MAP  
06-KER-14**