

STATEMENT OF JIM COSTA
MEMBER OF CONGRESS
20th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Thank you for this opportunity to comment on the future of California's transportation needs and more importantly the future of Highway 99. I am grateful to the California Assembly Members Arambula, Villines, Mathews, and Cogdill for their leadership and I thank them for their work in this regard.

I represent the 20th Congressional District in the State of California, which covers all of Kings County and portions of Kern County and Fresno County. I represented these counties in the State Legislature for 24 years. Since my election to Congress, I have worked with the San Joaquin Congressional delegation to win federal interstate status for Highway 99, as well as gaining designation as a federal high priority project. Congress recognizes that Highway 99 is a vital corridor for the economic health of the Central Valley and is working to this end. We will continue to work to gain funding and support for Highway 99.

The Goods Movement Plan developed by Secretary Alan Lloyd, of the California's Environmental Protection Agency and Secretary Sunne McPeak, of California's Business, Transportation and Housing Agency, was commissioned to address a variety of concerns to California. While the Plan focuses on air pollution and congestion, it devotes little attention to the acute needs of Highway 99. Of the budgeted \$12.8 billion, it designates only \$330 million dollars towards this critical State highway. This is not enough. This also ignores the advice of the Governor's "California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley" which recommended \$6 billion dollars over the next ten years to implement the necessary Highway 99 Business Plan. The Governor's plan for Highway 99 is correct. The Goods Movement Plan needs to reflect these

recommendations if Secretaries Lloyd and McPeak wish to produce a satisfactory plan.

Our Valley contributes over \$14 billion annually to California's economy, and is the nation's premier agricultural region. We must continue to work together to protect the economic future of our Valley. This includes ensuring that the state legislature and Administration support funding initiatives for Highway 99 while including 99 as a top state priority.

Highway 99 is vital to the continued movement of agriculture products and therefore it is vital to the economic health of the Valley itself. In order to support ongoing development, facilitate the movement of goods, improve the quality of life in one of the fastest growing regions in the state, a substantial investment must be made. I urge you to expedite long over due improvements in this regard.

The Congressional Research Service, a body devoted to assisting the Congress in making informed decisions, recently released a study that analyzed and examined the economic challenges of the San Joaquin Valley. Simply put, one of its main conclusions is something we already know, that the San Joaquin Valley is one of the most neglected regions in the nation. We can do better.

State investment is vital to the continued health and development of the region, especially in context of our phenomenal growth and the phenomenal challenges due to this growth. We must do better and the State of California bears a role in that.