



www.americanwhitewater.org

Dave Steindorf
California Stewardship Director
4 Baroni Drive
Chico, CA 95928
530-343-1871
dave@americanwhitewater.org

CalTrans
Attention: Joe Caputo II
703 B Street
Marysville, CA 95901
Joseph_Caputo@dot.ca.gov

RE: 84.5 Access Feasibility Report at State Route 99 Bridge on the Feather River

Dear Mr. Caputo,

American Whitewater (“AW”) writes to request a public hearing on the Access Feasibility Report, as required by Section 84.5 of the Streets and Highways Code, for the SR 99 Bridge over the Feather River. AW is a national 501(c)(3) non-profit organization with a mission to protect and restore our nation’s whitewater resources and enhance opportunities for the public to enjoy them safely. With over 5,500 members and 100 affiliate clubs, we represent the conservation interests of tens of thousands of whitewater enthusiasts throughout the country.

Section 84.5 of the California Streets and Highway Code states:

“During the design hearing process relating to state highway projects that include the construction by the department of a new bridge across a navigable river, there shall be included full consideration of, and a report on, the feasibility of providing a means of public access to the navigable river for public recreational purposes.”

American Whitewater has a considerable presence in California, and as the leading advocate for enhancing access to our nation’s rivers, we have a strong interest in ensuring that proper 84.5 Access Feasibility Studies are completed in a timely manner, provide adequate and thorough consideration of all potential access scenarios, and are made readily available to the public. It is our understanding that in the 40 years that Section 84.5 has been in place, this is the first and only feasibility study that has been completed.

The final feasibility report states that no comments regarding public access were made or received at the public meeting or during circulation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report in 2003. Lack of comment from the public regarding access is more likely a reflection on the wholly inadequate scoping and outreach to recreational river users than lack of interest or concern. As a leading advocate for river access in California, we were surprised to recently learn of Section 84.5 of the Streets and Highways Code and of the SR 99 project from a concerned citizen rather than through a scoping process. Lack of comment also does not absolve CalTrans of its duty to prepare, in a timely manner, a Section 84.5 Feasibility Study for this project, or for any of the numerous others that have been required in the last 40 years.

We write to request a public hearing on the feasibility report for providing access to the Feather River at the SR 99 Bridge. Based on our review of the report, it is not clear why there are limitations to providing access at this location and why the considered alternatives were denied. We look forward to hearing from you regarding this matter, and to working with you to improve river access throughout California in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dave Steindorf". The signature is written in a cursive style with a prominent loop at the end of the last name.

Dave Steindorf
California Stewardship Director