



*Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515*

*Anna G. Eshoo
Eighteenth District
California*

April 29, 2022

The Honorable David E. Price,
Chair
Subcommittee on Transportation, and
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
H-307 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mario Diaz-Balart,
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Transportation, and
Housing and Urban Development, and
Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1036 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Price and Ranking Member Diaz-Balart,

As you begin your critical work on the Fiscal Year 2023 Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development, and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, I strongly urge you to include \$400,000 for the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District to construct the Spooky Knoll Trail in El Sereno Open Space Preserve. This Community Project Funding request is associated with the Department of Transportation account for Highway Infrastructure Projects.

California State Route 17 (Highway 17) is a key transportation link between residential areas in the Santa Cruz Mountains and job centers in Silicon Valley. However, Highway 17 also divides the open space in the Santa Cruz Mountains and creates barriers for the movement of people and wildlife. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has partnered with the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority (VTA), the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and other community stakeholders to develop the Highway 17 Crossings Project which will create a wildlife undercrossing and a recreational trail crossing over the highway.

The requested funding will allow the District to construct the Spooky Knoll Trail in the El Sereno Open Space Preserve, connecting the trail network to the west of Highway 17 to the planned overcrossing. Once completed, the overcrossing will connect a regional trail network of over fifty miles of existing trails, facilitating safe community access for hiker, cyclists, and equestrians to the Bay Area Ridge Trail, Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail, Los Gatos Creek Trail, and others. The planned wildlife undercrossing will address habitat fragmentation and declining genetic diversity among wildfire populations, while also reducing collisions with wildlife on a busy section of the highway.

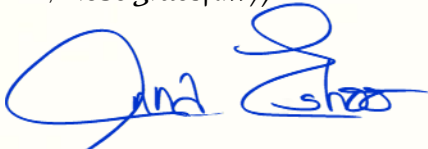
As an indication of community support, I've enclosed letters of support from the following local elected officials and community leaders:

- The Honorable Dave Cortese, Senator, California State Senate
- The Honorable Cindy Chavez, Supervisor, Santa Clara County Board of Supervisor
- Mr. James Lindsay, City Manager, City of Saratoga
- Walter T. Moore, President, Peninsula Open Space Trust
- Ms. Janet McBride, Executive Director, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council
- Ms. Theresa Romell, Senior Director, Funding Policy and Programs, Metropolitan Transportation Commission
- Ms. Ann Calnan, Manager, Environmental Programs, Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority

Furthermore, the Highway 17 Crossing Project was added to the Metropolitan Transportation Commission's Transportation Improvement Plan on March 23, 2022.

If enacted, this request would benefit wildlife, improve traffic safety, and promote recreational opportunities on public lands, and it's why I wholeheartedly support this Community Project Funding request and ask that you do so as well.

Most gratefully,



Anna G. Eshoo

Enclosures