

## Memorandum

**To:** CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS  
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

**CTC Meeting:** April 25-26, 2012

**Reference No.:** 2.3a.(1)  
Action item

**From:** NORMA ORTEGA  
Chief Financial Officer

**Prepared by:** Terry L. Abbott  
Division Chief  
Design

**Subject:** ROUTE ADOPTION – CONTROLLED ACCESS HIGHWAY, 6-KER-14 PM 57.8/62.0  
RESOLUTION HRA 12-04

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

Submitted for transmittal to the California Transportation Commission (Commission) are Highway Route Adoption Resolution HRA 12-04 and a route location map for State Highway Route (SR) 14. The California Department of Transportation (Department) recommends that the Commission approve the resolution and the route location map in accordance with the recommendation of the Acting Chief Engineer. The resolution grants approval of State highway route adoption of SR 14 in the county of Kern from Post Mile (PM) 57.8 to 62.0.

### **ISSUE:**

The Department proposes to adopt a portion of SR 14 as a controlled access highway from 0.1 mile north of SR 178 West junction, south of the unincorporated rural community of Indian Wells, to 1.4 miles north of SR 178 East junction. A Project Report was approved on October 29, 2007. A Supplemental Project Report was approved on April 12, 2010 to phase the project into three segments to fully fund each segment. An Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for California Environmental Quality Act and the document was approved on October 3, 2007. No CEQA re-evaluation was required for the Supplemental Project Report.

Recommended by: \_\_\_\_\_  
ROBERT PIEPLOW  
Acting Chief Engineer

**BACKGROUND:**

The purpose of this route adoption is to designate the remaining segment of conventional highway for State Route (SR) 14 as a controlled access highway (expressway). The proposed route adoption was prepared by the Department with support from Kern County and Kern Council of Governments (KernCOG). This route adoption corresponds to the northern segment of the project referred to as the Freeman Gulch Four-Lane Project (PM 45.9 to 62.3) and runs through the unincorporated rural community of Indian Wells. The ultimate facility will be a four-lane divided controlled access highway with increased capacity and will improve traffic safety and operations of SR 14.

SR 14 traverses Los Angeles and Kern Counties and it 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 portion of SR 14 proposed for route adoption is a two-lane conventional highway, where as the portions directly south and north of the proposed route adoption are two-lane expressways. Just south of the proposed adoption segment, SR 14 was adopted by the California Highway Commission as a freeway in 1956 and denominated as a controlled access highway on March 30, 2012. Just north of the proposed adoption segment, SR 14 was adopted by the Commission as a controlled access highway on June 28, 1989.

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.

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 includes the proposed route adoption and extends from 0.5 mile north of the SR 178 West junction to 1.7 miles north of SR 178 East junction (PM 58.3 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 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 drop to undesirable levels. The concept (20 year) Level of Service 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 KernCOG 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 facility along its entire length from its beginning at Interstate 5 in Los Angeles County to US 395 in Kern County. It should be noted that the portion of SR 14 covered by this project is the last segment of the route that has not been converted to a 4-lane facility. This project will greatly enhance the continuity of this route and provide a continuous 4-lane expressway from Interstate 5 through Kern County and along SR 395 up to near Olancho in Inyo County (a distance of 150 miles).

This request is for the controlled access highway Route Adoption. This route adoption will allow for the execution of a controlled-access highway agreement (CAHA) with Kern County. A concurrent environmental action is on this month's agenda, (see Resolution E-12-21).

Attachments:

- Resolution HRA 12-04
- Location Map
- Route Adoption Map

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
**Highway Route Adoption Resolution**  
**06-Ker-14 PM 57.8/62.0**

**Resolution HRA 12-04**

**WHEREAS**, the California Department of Transportation (Department) and Kern County jointly request approval of this Route Adoption as State Highway; and

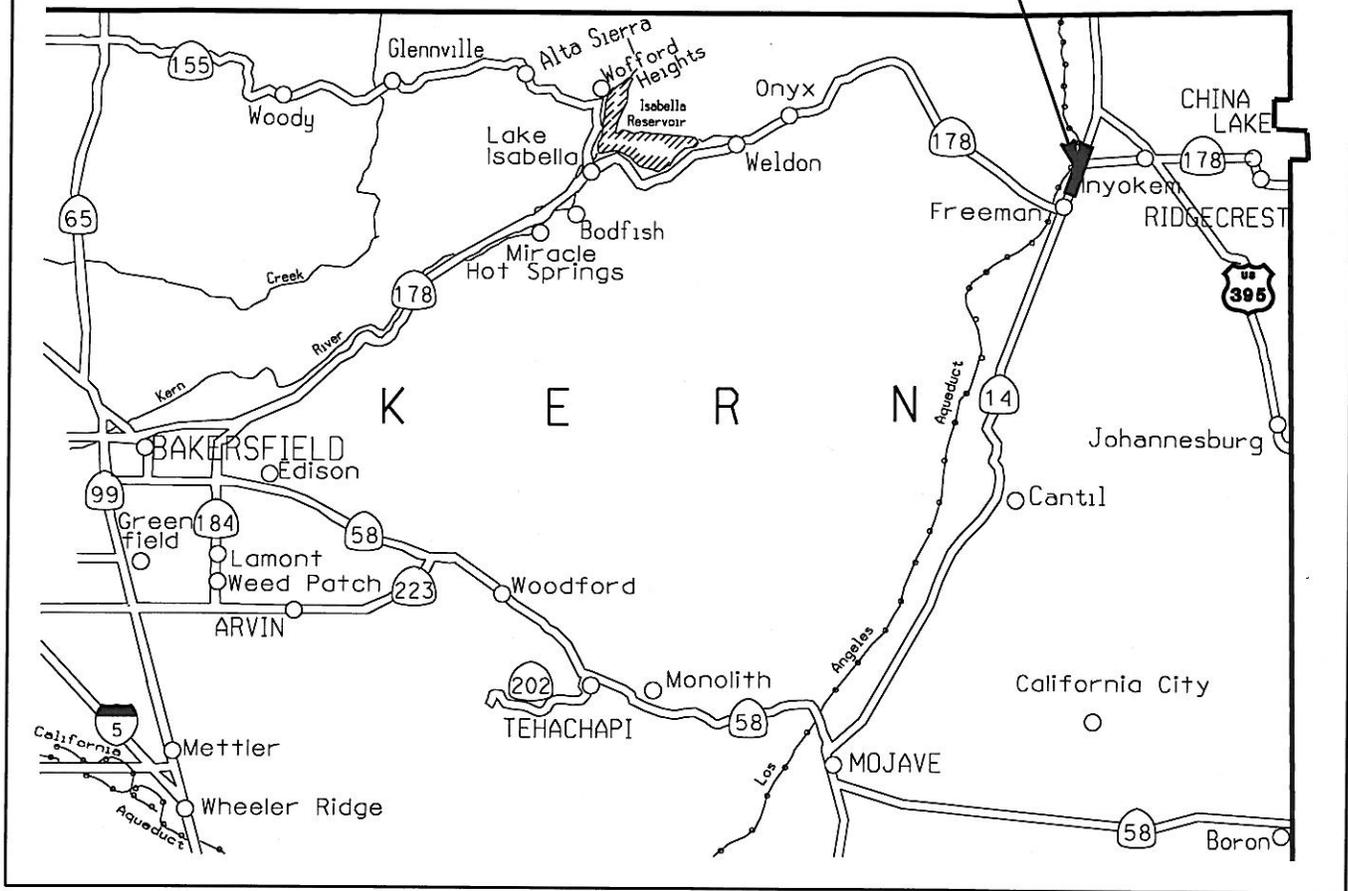
**WHEREAS**, an Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for California Environmental Quality Act and the document was approved on October 3, 2007; and

**WHEREAS**, the Project Report recommending the Route adoption was approved on October 29, 2007 and a Supplemental Project Report was approved on April 12, 2010 to phase the project into three segments to fully fund each segment.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** by the California Transportation Commission (Commission) that pursuant to the authority vested in it by law, this Commission does hereby select, adopt, and determine the location of that segment of State Highway Route 14 from 0.1 mile north of SR 178 West junction to 1.4 miles north of SR 178 East junction, in the county of Kern, and officially designate it as 06-KER-14, a Controlled Access Highway, as said location is shown on the Route Adoption map submitted by Terry L. Abbott, Chief Design Engineer; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this Commission has found and determined and hereby declares that such location of said State highway is for the best interest of the State.

**ROUTE TO BE ADOPTED**



**A CONTROLLED  
ACCESS HIGHWAY  
ROUTE ADOPTION  
LOCATION MAP  
06-KER-14**

