



November 13, 2014

Mr. Christopher Calfee, Senior Counsel
Governor's Office of Planning and Research
1400 10th St.
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Calfee,

As a transportation cyclist & bike advocate based in congestion-heavy Beverly Hills, I'm keenly interested to see my city take meaningful steps to make my commute (and my pleasure riding) more safe. After many decades of prioritizing auto travel over walking and cycling, we must revisit our assumptions about the role that streets play in our cities. Are they public spaces for all, or reserved only for motorists?

We can make it clear our streets belong to all users by writing laws that encourage the use of alternate modes of mobility like cycling. And to get that ball rolling, we can implement SB 743 in order to bring some mode-choice balance to a city like Beverly Hills where the motorist remains king.

No longer can we favor traffic throughput over safe transit. No longer can we view development traffic 'impacts' as solely a vehicular capacity concern. And no longer can we take for granted the deleterious knock-on effects of motorized mobility on the environment. Most important in the near term, however, is that we can no longer force those who bike to take the 'backseat' to motorists. We're all road users.

So I stand with the California Bicycle Coalition in supporting new guidelines to eliminate automobile congestion as an overriding mitigation criterion under CEQA. That practice has had the unwelcome effect of increasing motor travel speeds and throughput at the expense of street safety in cities like mine. Like CalBike, I support draft guidelines that include these recommendations:

- The use of vehicle miles traveled in lieu of automobile congestion as a measure of 'impact';
- The requirement to include in any analysis the effect of a project on bicycle safety;
- The continued inclusion of cycling as a mitigation measure under CEQA; and,
- The application of new guidelines to the entirety of the state.

As we know, Californians are beginning to travel differently today. Vehicle registrations and miles traveled are flat or declining. I want to see OPR follow on your already good greenhouse gas-reducing policies so that we can continue to improve our health & safety as we mitigate the impacts of development. To the extent that we can do that with a bicycle lane (even better, a 'protected' one) we're all better off for it.

Tomorrow we will see even greater declines as younger travelers opt for mass transit, bicycles, scooters or skateboards. Without state guidance, however, a city like Beverly Hills – perpetually locked in a mid-century suburban state of mind – will be too slow to change our development posture. Now is the time to change the way we plan for mobility in our cities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Mark Elliot'.

Better Bike

Mark Elliot, Organizer
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