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**COUNTY OF MENDOCINO
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

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March 7, 2017

The Honorable Jim Wood
State Capitol
PO Box 942849
Sacramento, CA 94249-0002

Re: Support for Senate Bill 1: Transportation Funding

Dear Assemblyman Wood:

On behalf of Mendocino County, I urge you and the California legislature to pass a transportation funding package in 2017 to address the billions of dollars in backlogged maintenance needs that have led to potholes, deteriorating roads, bridges and transit systems here in our community. The longer we wait to fix the small problems, the bigger and more expensive they become. In fact, it costs eight times more to fix a road than to maintain it.

Thankfully there are positive signs. Legislative leaders and Governor Brown have promised to pass a long-term, dedicated transportation funding package early this year. Passage of two bills, SB 1 (Beall) and AB 1 (Frazier) will generate new revenue that can boost funding for transportation fixes in Mendocino County. These bills also contain strong accountability requirements to reduce bureaucracy and streamline project delivery.

I am glad to note that SB 1, the first of the bills up for a vote, passed through Senate Transportation Committee on February 14.

The County of Mendocino's local streets and roads are in poor condition and are facing an unmet need of \$625 million according to the statewide needs assessment. Without an immediate investment of new revenue into the system, our infrastructure will continue to decline, which will only increase the cost burden on future tax payers. SB 1 and AB 1 would allow us to reinvest in our existing infrastructure. Mendocino County would be able to bring our infrastructure into good condition, by applying pavement preservation treatments to 300 miles of road, paving 150 miles of road, and repairing 21 bridges and other much-needed maintenance and improvements.

We strongly support SB 1 and AB 1 because both bills will provide:

New revenues for transportation. Though not identical, both SB 1 and AB 1 are long-term transportation reform and funding packages that contain new revenues to make road safety improvements, fill potholes and repair local streets, highways, bridges and overpasses. Both bills

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would raise at least \$6 billion when fully phased in, which is what is needed to make a dent in the maintenance backlog. The new maintenance revenues will be split equally between state and local roads.

Strong accountability provisions. SB 1 and AB 1 include provisions to streamline projects by cutting bureaucratic redundancies and red tape to ensure transportation funds are spent efficiently and effectively. Both bills give more independence to the California Transportation Commission and establish the independent office of Transportation Inspector General to perform audits, improve efficiency and increase transparency. But SB 1 and AB 1 should be coupled with strong constitutional protections to prevent the state Legislature from using any new revenues for anything except road maintenance, improvement, and transportation projects.

It has been 23 years since California has increased funding for transportation. As a result, road repairs now receive only 50 percent of the funding they did back in 1994. Inflation, more fuel efficient cars, and electric and hybrid vehicles have eroded transportation funding over the years. Motorists are paying the price. According to a 2015 study from the National Transportation Research Group, the poor condition of California streets and roads costs the average driver \$762 annually in maintenance costs.

We have more than \$130 billion dollars in needed upgrades to our state highway system (\$59 billion) and our local streets and roads (\$73 billion). Legislators must act quickly to pass a transportation funding package to prevent further deterioration of our network and further deterioration of our cars from driving on pothole-filled roads.

For these reasons, the County of Mendocino supports SB 1 and AB 1. For more information on our position, please do not hesitate to contact our Transportation Department Director who looks forward to discussing these ideas with you in more depth should you or your staff desire – contact: Howard N. Dashiell, (707)463-4363.

Sincerely,

John McCowen, Chair
Mendocino County Board of Supervisors

Cc. The Honorable Jim Frazier, California State Assembly
The Honorable Jim Beall, California State Senate
California State Association of Counties (CSAC)
Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC)
Howard N. Dashiell, Mendocino County Department of Transportation