

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

5/9/2019

The Honorable Nicole R. Nason, Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Nason:

We write to express our deep concerns with recent decisions by FHWA to deny extensions to Santa Cruz County for the use of Emergency Relief funds granted to your agency by Congress to address road damages from storms in 2016.

FHWA has traditionally acknowledged the unique building challenges in California and routinely provided extensions to the two-year window for governments to use emergency relief funds. These funds provide local and state governments the ability to rebuild critical transportation infrastructure and ensure the safety of our residents.


Particularly, Santa Cruz County suffered over \$120 million of road damages from storms in 2016 and 2017. If FHWA continues to deny extension requests, Santa Cruz County will be faced with \$35 million in unreimbursed roadwork for 77 sites around the County. This total is almost three times the County's annual budget for road maintenance.

There are many factors that prevent these projects from being ready for construction after two years, but none of them involve lack of effort on the part of Santa Cruz County. And this is not a problem reserved for Santa Cruz, as the California State Association of Counties estimates that there are 114 projects in the state of California in need of an extension, totaling \$73 million.

Since extensions for these types of projects had been routine at FHWA, we hope you will reconsider this new policy. We thank you in advance for your consideration of our request, and we would be pleased to provide you additional information on the damages incurred by Santa Cruz County, as well as a typical storm damage repair schedule for the area.

Sincerely,


Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress


Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress