Mail to: Congressman Jared Huffman

 317 3rd Street, Suite 1

 Eureka, Ca. 95501

 Re: Last Chance Grade

Bob Alvarado

Chairman, California Transportation Commission

1120 N. Street, MS-52

Sacramento, Ca. 95814

Mr. Alvarado,

I am writing in strong support of the California Department of Transportation’s request for funding to perform environmental clearance for geotechnical investigation of a potential new alignment of U.S. Highway 101 between Klamath and Crescent City in the area known as Last Chance Grade. This funding is a critical step in ensuring the coastal highway does not experience a major failure or require continuation of the constant maintenance of the past several decades.

Caltrans has spent over $40 million maintaining the current alignment on Last Chance Grade since 1981. Last year, Governor Jerry Brown proclaimed a “*State of Emergency*” due to damage caused by El Nino storms in Del Norte County. This past winter, additional significant damage occurred at Last Chance Grade, including a new slide which collapsed one of the two lanes of the highway. This was followed weeks later by a slide onto the highway which caused a closure for several hours. Caltrans is actively engaged with the Federal Highways Administration on negotiating the use of Emergency Relief funds to repair the damage and keep essential traffic flowing on the existing roadway.

A significant failure at Last Chance Grade would force a detour of approximately 320 miles (and six to eight hours of additional driving time). Caltrans has estimated a full closure of the route would cost the local economy in excess of $130 million annually. As a member of the community and \_\_\_(any other aspect to include)\_\_\_\_ I am part of the local citizenry very concerned with this situation. It is reassuring that for this project, Caltrans is working closely with resource and permitting agencies, environmental groups, local governments and tribes to address environmental and cultural issues *before* embarking on this effort.

The CTC funding you are considering would allow Caltrans to initiate studies and investigations of potential alignments of the highway around Last Chance Grade to provide the safety of the travelers and the economies of Humboldt, Del Norte and Curry Counties. Please give this funding your full and fair consideration.