

August 25, 2023

Dear Calaveras Ready,

My name is Tom Infusino, and I am sending you these comments on behalf of the Calaveras Planning Coalition (CPC). The CPC is a group of community organizations and individuals who want a healthy and sustainable future for Calaveras County. We believe that public participation is critical to a successful planning process. United behind twelve Land Use and Development Principles, we seek to balance the conservation of local agricultural, natural and historic resources, with the need to provide jobs, housing, safety and services.

Thank you for the very fine work you have done on the *Draft Calaveras County Evacuation and Access Needs Assessment and Preparedness Plan*. As you know, your public outreach resulted in people identifying over 750 impediments to evacuation, which you consolidated into over 375 projects to improve emergency evacuation safety and efficiency. We hope that CCOG, Caltrans, Calaveras County Public Works and others will work together to secure the State and Federal funding available to implement these projects. Someday soon the lives of the people we love may depend upon safe and effective emergency evacuation. Our grateful comments on the draft plan are below.

Chapter One does an excellent job of dividing the County into functional evacuation zones and identifying the relevant demographic, critical facility, and road information for each zone. This familiarizes readers with a base of common facts used in later parts of the plan.

Chapter Two explains how you consulted public officials and members of the public in preparing the plan. These consultations and your transparency add weight to the plan and increase public confidence in your findings. Thank you, especially, for the two maps identifying the over 750 pins dropped on the maps by survey respondents identifying road hazards along evacuation routes. These help to highlight how the communities of Copperopolis, Valley Springs, and those along the Upper Highway 4 corridor are all in great need of evacuation route improvements. We hope that the geographically broad scope of the problem will help to galvanize local government support for prompt action to correct emergency evacuation route deficiencies.

Chapter Three accurately identifies high and serious local risks associated with wildfire, flooding, and debris flow.

Chapter Four frankly identifies the great vulnerability of communities in County Supervisor District 2 to hazards from wildfire and landslides. It also shows the risk that hazards pose to critical roads and to critical bridges along the Highway 4, 49 and 26 corridors. Thank you for the illuminating maps depicting these risks and vulnerabilities.

Chapter Five identifies priority corridors for later inclusion in an evacuation plan, as well as the percentage of traffic leaving the County borne by each road. The map on page 70 does a good job of communicating these facts. We hope that Calaveras County will include these critical evacuation corridors in an amendment to its General Plan Safety Element.

Chapter Five also reveals that people are not sure how they will be alerted to the need to evacuate and how to find out where to go during an evacuation event. Critical facility operators and first responders

indicate that there is a great need for community education, for additional staff and funding, and for the improvement of evacuation routes, especially Highway 4.

Chapter Six places the necessary projects into functional groups. It identifies projects to create defensible space and remove hazard trees on specific County and State roads. It identifies projects to reduce flood risks on County and State roads. It identifies six priority programs and identifies State and Federal funding available to implement them. We especially appreciate this detailed effort in Chapter Six to identify the ways to timely implement the recommendations of the plan on the ground in our communities.

With Gratitude,

Tom Infusino, Facilitator

Calaveras Planning Coalition