

# Letter: Not happy with Caltrans on Hwy. 50

To the community,

As you have no doubt experienced, Highway 50, as you approach the Y, is again subject to extensive construction. I am sure that when this project is completed it will be an asset to our community and improve the condition of Highway 50 by providing sidewalks, bike trails, curbs and gutters.



Bruce Grego

However, I am very concerned about the time frame for this project's completion. Has anybody considered the long-term negative impact on the local businesses in the areas affected? Has anyone interviewed or surveyed these businesses to learn of their economic suffering? There is almost nowhere for patrons to turn into these many businesses. Most of the ingress/egress to these parking lots and driveways are obscured by large pieces of construction equipment as well as other obstructions. Many have a driveway with a short-width metal plate causing vehicles to barely maneuver or enter the driveway.

On some days there are no "left turns" off of Highway 50 to enter the driveways to businesses, and more recently, no right turns to moving traffic. It is evident that traffic to these businesses has been reduced. How can any business hope to have any commercial activity when construction is occurring in

front of their property making accessibility extremely difficult and uninviting? How many seasons of invasive construction on Highway 50 must we be asked to endure? Have we forgotten that the summer season is the primary source of income for many businesses in our community?

Since the beginning of this summer season, it is not uncommon to find only three or four construction workers on the entire construction site; despite this fact, large areas of traffic lanes are coned off, clogging up traffic. During other times, the crew is no more than a dozen workers or so at a time. There is no reason that the construction staff could not be increased by three- or fourfold in order to complete these projects at a much greater pace. In fact, had these projects been properly staffed, this work could have been completed in 30-45 days in most areas.

In addition, I do not understand why the contractor does not complete one side of the highway before tearing up the other side of the highway. I suspect the contractor, under his contract with Caltrans, has the entire summer to complete these projects without regard to the impact upon the local businesses, as well as, the general impression it leaves with our visitors. It's a mess.

Is this the pattern we are to expect when Caltrans constructs the roundabout in Meyers? How about the Echo Summit bridge project that will shutdown our main transportation artery for two summers? Does anybody in authority care?

To add insult to injury, except for some minor efforts to fill in some of the cracks and holes, Highway 50 is still very broken up from the winter, not to mention all the damage caused by the natural gas company during their pipe relocation project. You would think with lanes being closed down for these projects, using a separate construction crew to patch holes and smooth out the Highway would be a good use of resources.

Have our local officials been involved during the contract negotiations with Caltrans and the contractors to ensure that the work would be completed expeditiously, minimizing the impact upon small businesses and all others using the highway? Where are our local government officials now to protect our community and it's businesses?

It seems all too often our city is more interested in the anticipation of new development rather than the impacts such development has upon existing businesses and residents of our community. Can we forget the damages our community experienced with Project 3, (the hole). Or the projected damages upon housing and businesses that our community will experience with the proposed construction of the loop road.

These projects on Highway 50 have taken too long and have occurred too often. There needs to be a clear timeline for completion with adequate and well staffed construction crews so that we stop injuring our local businesses and the community that relies on our road system on a daily basis.

**Bruce Grego, South Lake Tahoe**