DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors  BY: Eric J. Erickson  PHONE: 966-3222

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION: (Policy Item: Yes ___ No X)

Request for Assistance to Maximize Availability of Trans-Sierra Highways

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The attached letter from Mono County Administrative Officer, Bill Mayer, requests assistance from Mariposa County to accelerate efforts this year to guarantee the commitments necessary to open the major trans-Sierra highways as early as possible in the Spring and to keep them open as late as practical in the Fall.

Mono County has requested the counties of Fresno, Inyo, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, Tuolumne and Bishop to consider providing financial assistance to their efforts to open these passes as soon as possible.

The Board of Supervisors may take action to allocate Advertising Funds for this effort by resolving to appropriate funds from Advertising Contingency to the Advertising Budget, or may identify some other funding to assist in the opening and maintenance of these highways.

Mike Finley, the designated representative of the National Parks Service, is reported to have requested assistance. The costs to the National Parks is extremely high for snow removal and road maintenance and repairs.

LIST ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:

1. Support the request and approve appropriation of funds with direction to the Auditor;
2. Do not support the request. Funding will not be provided.

COSTS: ( ) Not Applicable  A. Budgeted current FY $ 0  B. Total anticipated costs $  C. Required additional funding $  D. Internal transfers $  

SOURCE: ( ) 4/5ths Vote Required
A. Unanticipated revenues $ B. Reserve for contingencies $ C. Source description: Balance in Reserve for Contingencies, if approved: $  

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS: List the attachments and number the pages consecutively: Package from Mono County Requesting Assistance  

CLERK'S USE ONLY:
Res. No.: 93- 243  Ord. No.  Vote - Ayes: Noes:  Absent:  Abstained:  

Approved:  Denied  Minute Order Attached:  No Action Necessary

The foregoing instrument is a correct copy of the original on file in this office.

Date: ATTEST:  MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board  
County of Mariposa, State of California  
By: Deputy

4-27Hwy  Action Form Revised 5/92

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION:
This item on agenda as:  Recommended  Not Recommended  
For Policy Determination  Submitted with Comment  Returned for Further Action

Comment:  
A.O. Initials:  

Action Form Revised 5/92
MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: EVELYN BILLINGS, AUDITOR
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, CLERK OF THE BOARD
RE: REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO MAXIMIZE
AVAILABILITY OF TRANS-SIERRA HIGHWAYS

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
ADOPTED THIS Order on April 27, 1993

ACTION AND VOTE:

3:36 p.m. Request for Assistance to Maximize Availability of Trans-Sierra Highways (Erickson)
BOARD ACTION: (M)Baggett, (S)Balmain, Res. 93-243
adopted allocating $1,000 assistance. Following further discussion, previous motion was amended, agreeable with maker and second, authorizing expenditure of $2,000, with payment to be made to Mono County upon receipt of appropriate documentation/Ayes: Baggett, Balmain, Erickson, Parker; Noes: Taber.

cc: Bill Mayer, Mono County Administrative Officer
Mike Finley, Yosemite National Park Superintendent
Jim Evans, Housing and Community Development
Mike Coffield, County Administrative Officer
April 7, 1993

County Administrator
County of Mariposa
P.O. Box 784
Mariposa, CA 95338

RE: Request for Assistance to Maximize Availability of Trans-Sierra Highways

Dear County Administrator:

The Mono County Board of Supervisors has accelerated efforts this year to guarantee the commitments necessary to open the major trans-Sierra highways as early as possible in the Spring and keep them open as late as practical during the Fall. Our work is focusing on Highway 120 over Tioga Pass, and also including Highway 108 over Sonora Pass. These efforts are aimed toward maximizing the visitor travel season upon which the Eastern Sierra is so dependent.

Attached is material considered by our Board on April 6, 1993, regarding Tioga Pass. The Board approved the commitment of $8,000 - $10,000 in personnel and equipment to assist in the removal of snow from Hwy 120 within the Yosemite National Park boundary. Also included is an indication of commitment to help in this effort from the Town of Mammoth Lakes.

The Mono County Board of Supervisors has requested that the Counties of Fresno, Inyo, Madera, Mariposa, Merced, and Tuolumne, as well as the City of Bishop, also consider providing financial assistance (even a token amount) to our efforts in this regard. It is evident that these counties also can expect tourism increases through a longer trans-Sierra travel season.
Therefore, we would very much appreciate your bringing this matter to the attention of your Board of Supervisors, for their consideration and possible action.

Please let us know if we can provide additional information or assistance. Thank you for your help in this vital matter of mutual economic interest to our counties.

Sincerely,

Bill Mayer
County Administrative Officer
County of Mono

WTM:mk

cc: Mono County Board of Supervisors
Tioga Pass Council
DATE: April 6, 1993

TO: Board of Supervisors

FROM: Rich Boardman, Public Works Director

SUBJECT: Assistance to Other Governmental Agencies Tioga Pass/Spring Snow Removal

RECOMMENDED ACTION

In consideration of Section 1670 of the California Streets and Highways Code, authorize the Director of Public Works to utilize County Road Department personnel and equipment to assist in the removal of snow from State Highway 120 within Yosemite National Park Service boundary. All work to be done in general conformance with the March 26, 1993 request from the National Parks Service.

DISCUSSION

The California Streets and Highways Code, Section 1670 authorizes the Board of Supervisors to enter into cooperative agreements with Federal officers concerning survey, construction and maintenance of highways, within or outside of the County limits.

The National Parks Service, through their designated representative, Mr. Michael Finley, has requested assistance concerning Spring Snow Removal on Highway 120 within Yosemite Park. Mr. Finley indicates that our early snow removal activities are essential and will provide a longer window of opportunity concerning scheduled road improvements within the Tuolumne Meadows area of the park.

Last year it would appear that Mono County charged approximately $6,000.00 in men and equipment to this activity. This year I would anticipate, due to the heavier snows, that our costs to open that same section of road may be in the neighborhood of $8,000.00 - $10,000.00. The costs for this activity, as in prior years, would be charged to the Road Fund/Assistance to Other Governmental Entities.

It should be noted that CalTrans has already started their snow removal operations and that they anticipate reaching the park boundary about mid-April. I anticipate that this will coincide with the park policy which would not allow snow removal operation in the Tuolumne Meadows area to commence prior to April 15th.

It should also be noted that the Town of Mammoth Lakes has been contacted with respect to a similar commitment and that the initial response has been favorable.
Richard Boardman, Director
Mono County Public Works
P.O. Box 457
Bridgeport, California 93517

Dear Mr. Boardman:

We appreciate the cooperation that Mono County has provided to Yosemite National Park during past snow removal operations. This year we again appreciate your willingness to support our operations from the Entrance Station, west 6.5 miles to where the Ranger Station access road intersects. This section of road will be rehabilitated this year and dry out time will be important to accommodate the narrow window of construction time this summer. After this year's road improvements, our worries of road failures in Spring should be significantly reduced.

We realize this year's Spring snow removal project will be much more involved due to the snow load and moisture content, as in the past, your consideration in this matter will be greatly appreciated. If the Spring opening project is approved, Park policy will permit the snow plowing within the Park to start on April 15th. This date is set in consideration for Winter recreation activities.

Sincerely,

Michael V. Finley
Superintendent
March 29, 1993

Tim Alpers, Supervisor, District #3
County of Mono
Post Office Box 715
Bridgeport, California 93517

Dear Tim:

Although the Town Council has not provided specific direction on the Town's commitment to Tioga Pass, a majority of the Council has indicated continuing support for the effort. I believe the Council will support the effort to the same degree they did last year. The matter will go before the Council on April 7th.

Sincerely,

Glenn Thompson
Town Manager

cc: Town Council
Doolittle fights to open Tioga

By Paul Elwell

At a hearing of the National Parks, Forest and Public Lands Subcommittee last week, the acting director of the National Park Service reported a delay in the opening of Tioga Pass due to weather and budget constraints.

According to Fourth District Congressman John Doolittle (R - Rocklin), who sits on the subcommittee, such a decision to reopen the pass sometime Memorial Day weekend will greatly impact the economy of the Eastern Sierra because the route is considered a major artery for tourists.

"You're looking at your financial picture," Doolittle said to NPS Acting Director Herbert Cabels, Jr. during the hearing. "What about the financial picture of the communities that depend on the pass?"

After hearing testimony from local government and business representatives, Doolittle said the timely opening of the pass has "become a personal priority with me."

Mono County Supervisors and Tioga Pass Council members recently traveled to Sacramento to lobby for the earlier opening of the pass. They requested state and federal officials to sit down and determine a "reasonable" set of criteria for future opening and closing of the pass.

Washington officials directed their regional Park Service counterparts to devise ways of seeing Tioga, Page A-8

seeking additional funding or slashing costs such as cutting down on visitor center hours, closing some outlying campgrounds and keeping the pass closed longer.

However, Doolittle responded by saying Yosemite National Park has seen an increase in its budget by 47 percent in the last five years. In the last 10 years, its budget has been increased about 100 percent while inflation has been about 40-50 percent, he said.

"One could argue that there is mismanagement in the Park Service," Doolittle said. He added he would keep close watch on the Park Service's activities.

Estimates show that business activity of motels and lodging places increase 300-400 percent when the road is accessible.

Shelley Chennel, owner of Channel's Union 76 station in Lee Vining has conducted a lengthy survey relating the opening and closing of the pass to the increase in gasoline pumped.

Considering a 30-day period — 15 days prior and 15 days after the opening — Channel's business reported a 66 percent increase in the amount of gasoline pumped during the last five years.

According to Mammoth Lakes Tourism Director Ralph McMullen, in light of the new economic plan of President Bill Clinton, tourism and economic issues relating to the access through Tioga Pass should be considered more.

"I really appreciate Congressman Doolittle's efforts," McMullen said. "I'm glad to see that we have a congressman who recognizes the importance of tourism and our economic well-being."

McMullen said tourism is the number one industry for the area. "Tourists come to our area to enjoy themselves and spend money. The key (to promoting tourism) is transportation, and so we must open the pass as soon as possible."

The area has also seen an influx of international tourists.

According to McMullen, European visitors who are used to traveling over passes higher than Tioga (elevation 9,945 feet) cannot understand why the pass is closed when the ones at the Alps..."