

The San Diego Union-Tribune.
Letters to the editor

October 31, 2007

South Bay Expressway and meeting standards

Regarding "Rush to open / Toll road fails environmental, safety standards" (Editorial, Oct. 29):

South Bay Expressway is committed to building a first class road, which will deliver significant benefits to the entire South Bay region. Our team has worked diligently over the last four years to ensure we deliver a project that not only meets the needs of our customers, but also meets safety and environmental standards. South Bay Expressway has spent an unparalleled \$20 million on the environment and has received awards for its environmental program, including recent honors from the Federal Highway Administration as an Exemplary Ecosystem Initiative and from the Association of Environmental Professions for our environmental training program.

We have been working diligently with Caltrans to ensure that we have all the necessary approvals for opening South Bay Expressway. We invited the Regional Water Quality Control Board to tour our project in September and at that time we received their input. We're now implementing their recommendations.

The safety of our customers is our number one priority, and we take the publication of any news article or editorial questioning this very seriously. This is a hallmark project for the region, and the community has waited a long time for South Bay Expressway to open. Rest assured that when we open on Nov. 19, we will deliver a first class, environmentally responsible, safe expressway.

GREG HULSIZER
Chief Executive Officer
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An editorial Oct. 29 provided an opinion based on outdated information questioning the safety of the South Bay Expressway (state Route 125 South).

It should be simply understood that this highly anticipated toll road project is still under construction, and in the end will have achieved a series of comprehensive checks and balances to make sure it surpasses all safety and environmental compliances when it opens on Nov. 19.

The California Department of Transportation has oversight on this public-private partnership, and our role is simple: to provide the people of the state of California with a safe, first-rate, highly functional return on their investment. This project had input from various controlling agencies, including the Regional Water Quality Control Board, and is implementing the requirements. This type of critical input was not ignored.

Caltrans has extensive professional expertise in the area of water quality and recently earned the Environmental Protection Agency's 2007 Clean Water Act Recognition for Stormwater Management.

Caltrans and our partners at South Bay Expressway will not allow the toll road to open until we are 100 percent satisfied it is safe. There are still some construction work and inspections ahead of us; however, your readers and the customers who will use this expressway can rest assured that it will have surpassed all the highest safety standards when opening day comes – or it will not open. It's that simple.

PEDRO ORSO-DELGADO
District Director
California Department of Transportation