[MS-0087.005.004.002]

ZERO POPULATION GROWTH

4536 PARK BOULEVARD • SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA 92116 • PHONE: (714) 291-4650

February 15, 1972

Attn: Hon. Mayor Wilson and Members of the City Council

Re: I-15 Freeway Proposal along 40th St.

This Spring the California Division of Highways will approach the City Council requesting approval of a project design for extension of Interstate freeway 15 along 40th St. between Adams Av. and Landis St. According to Division of Highways District Engineer, Jacob Dekema, the construction of the eight-lane,(block and a half wide) $24 million freeway will require the removal of 650 homes, apartments and businesses; and will displace about 2,000 residents of the Mid-City Community.

Zero Population Growth of San Diego respectfully requests that the City Council delay any decision to approve the extension of Interstate 15, which will be designated State Highway 15. This route must have the approval of the City before the project can proceed. We ask that you deny the Division of Highways their request of a "freeway agreement" at this time for the following reasons:

--Construction of the highway will mean the loss of 12 or more city blocks of desirable residential housing in a balanced community.

--The road will cause disruption of the mixed Mid-City Community, and create a barrier to the social and environmental and aesthetic integrity of the area which has a full aray of public services which will be irreplaceable.

--Provision for public services is a major problem in San Diego as is evident in the lack of facilities and finances to provide services in the Mira Mesa development, and in other outlying fringes of the City, and because of the unwillingness of the public to pass bonds or tolerate an increase in taxes. The proposed expenditure of public funds to destroy the balance of the community and upset the public facilities in order to increase traffic flow is not in the public interest!

--The social and environmental costs to the community have not been fully and objectively analyzed by the Division of Highways. Specifically, there will be the loss of desirable housing for elderly and middle-income persons as well as minorities and young people; loss of aesthetic value of the community and some open space, and possible infringement on recreational areas which are inadequate already in the area; increased noise, greatly increased air pollution problems from freeway construction; and the side-effects of a barrier to the "sense of community" that exists, could cause ghetto and slum conditions to arise as well as social and racial tensions to build; and severe dislocation and mental readjustment caused by forced displacement of long-time residents.

(more...)

Zero Population Growth feels that the environmental impact statement prepared by the State Division of Highways is wholly inadequate and lacking in consideration for the overall effects of the construction of this project. ZPG feels that a new and more complete statement is necessary, and that the new statement be much broader in scope to include detailed information on the environmental, aesthetic, social, economic, racial, and other considerations.

In requesting that the City Council delay action on a freeway agreement with DOH, ZPG proposes the following alternatives and recommendations as a practical and sincere effort to provide solutions to this controversy:

1. As mentioned above, a more complete environmental impact statement is necessary as a first step.
2. The denial of a freeway agreement should be based on the basic need for a comprehensive, regional transportation plan, in order to determine the true relationship of the proposed highway to the overall desirability for additional freeways in the San Diego County Region. Such a regional transportation study could be done by the County's Comprehensive Planning Organization. We suggest that a more objective and credible impact analysis would also be prepared by CPO.
3. A project design should be done by DOH (or CPO) for an alternate of conversion of 40th St. and Central to one-way streets with minimal destruction of housing to facilitate traffic flow and eliminate safety hazards.
4. A long range solution for this route, is study of transportaion alternatives, such as conversion of the corridor into a mass public transportation route, and consideration of various transportation systems which would be adequate for the community.
5. An interim proposal is to increase the City's bus service along 40th street to maximize service and scheduling as a means of reducing congestion. Closing the route to trucks after the opening of Interstate 805 is another possibility.
6. As a final, long-range recommendation, we propose that one of the best possible solutions to transportation problems in San Diego is the formation of a Regional Transportation Authority, which would have control of all transportation systems in the County (as well as the Division of Highways). Such an agency would offer balance and continuity in transportation planning, construction, and operation of all systems. This agency might be another function of the CPO.

Additional consideration should be given to bringing this matter to the discretion of the citizens in the form of a ballot proposition. The voters should have the right to decide whether or not they desire an additional freeway disrupting their community. In the past the practices of the Division of Highways have not been completely democratic, nor has the agency allowed for full public input and participation in the highway planning and decision-making process.

In closing, Zero Population Growth of San Diego believes that the quality of human life in urban areas is declining as a result of the encroachment of more concrete freeways and automobiles and unnecessary growth. Air pollution in cities is mainly caused by automobiles, and new freeways mean more polluting cars. Recent reports by the County's Air Pollution Control District show that air pollution levels are rising. The regional air basin of San Diego's environment cannot tolerate additional population growth while we depend on the automobile as the major source of transportation. New alternatives are necessary to decrease our dependence on the automobile, and building new freeways is not the way to achieve a higher quality of life!

Sincerely,

Jim Jacobson

Jim Jacobson,
for the Steering Committee
ZPG, San Diego Chapter

DEAR FRIENDS,

Enclosed is a copy of our statement to the San Diego City Council in opposition to the proposed State Route 15 between Adams Av. and Landis St., along 40th St. East and West. The statement will explain our opposition. We sincerely hope that you and/or your organization will help us in this freeway battle--we will need all the help we can get against the Division of Highways.

The Division of Highways cannot proceed with this destructive project unless they get approval, and a "freeway agreement" with the City of San Diego. So we ask that you direct your letters and phone calls to Mayor Pete Wilson, and the City Council. With an upsurge of public response, we can defeat a freeway in San Diego! Won't you join us?

Sincerely, ZERO POPULATION GROWTH