

We Can Do Better

The \$12 Million Oops

784 feet of new Highway 25



What am I talking about? This is how we get to a \$202 billion budgets by spending \$12 million on Highway 25 in Southern San Benito County. The road is near Pinnacles National Park but is not greatly used—350 cars daily in one direction. What you are looking at is Caltrans first attempt to fix it and it was \$2 million. It lasted about two weeks before it came crashing down—and luckily no one was hurt which is one benefit of the low traffic count. The distance of this project is 784 feet. On a per mile basis--\$80 million! Understand that this road is bad for 38 miles—winding around the hills, which attracts motorcycle drivers from around the world. And occasionally said motorcycles don't obey rational speed limits and become unintentional organ donors. All 38 miles needs to be straightened but this \$12 million project is not part of any long-term plan so if this road can be improved it is not probable that this will fit into the final plan. Whether the road ever is improved is questionable but it does serve one of only 62 National Parks in the US.

What story does this tell? All the things that are not great about California. The engineer and let's hope this was one of his first jobs was forced by CEQUA to make some very bad engineering decisions—primarily vertical cuts in soft gravelly rock. There are some oak trees and they must be saved so the vertical cuts. Everyone else—the Caltrans engineering supervisor, the manager, the District Director, Regional Director, Caltrans Head Director, Secretary overseeing Caltrans, and I think we are finally at the Governor. What more does anyone need to know that spending \$12 million on 784' has no justification whatsoever. And that is how you get to a \$202 billion budget without getting a lot in return.

As to my opponent—he has been involved with this for 10 years and has not intervened—8 years as a supervisor and 2 as an assemblyman.

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