

May 11, 2007: Sanchez Explains Her Vote on Davis Amendment

Open Process for Hwy 241

By Rep. Loretta Sanchez (D-Garden Grove)

On Thursday night, my colleague Susan Davis from San Diego, offered an amendment to restore the application of state law to the SR241 highway project, which is planned to go through U.S. Marine base Camp Pendleton, and through the San Onofre State Park which is located on base property. Much has been said of this amendment and my vote on the amendment. Much of it is ill-informed. The amendment did not "kill" the SR241 extension. It merely removed language which exempted the project from the jurisdiction of state law. Nor does this amendment take authority away from the Secretary of the Navy to grant easements. As a senior member of the House Armed Services Committee, I feel confident that the Secretary of the Navy knows what is best for the safety and security of Camp Pendleton.

As I have stated repeatedly, I have not taken a position against the toll road. In fact, I have been supportive of other similar construction projects, such as the 73, which has been of great benefit to the residents of Orange County, and was built with great sensitivity to environmental concerns. What concerns me is that the SR241 be constructed with the same care and attention and legitimacy as these other projects, as any other project would be in our great state. As the law stands now, it permits the "recipient of the easement to construct, operate, and maintain [the highway], notwithstanding any provision of State law to the contrary..." If the Davis amendment is adopted it means that the impact on the environment will be fully reviewed, and labor will be paid according to California's prevailing wage law.

I have been told repeatedly that all those involved with the construction of the SR241 have observed and respected every state law that applies to the project. If that is the case, then the Davis amendment will have no effect. There is a concern that future state laws will prevent construction of the road for one reason or the other. I share that concern. I remain vigilant so that Orange County can determine which roads are built in our community.

My job as a representative is to make sure the process is open and fair, and that every party has the opportunity to present its case. I am confident in this process. And I am confident that when we build the road it will be to the benefit of all our citizens. Our process, the democratic process, will lead to the best solution.