

Erin Dunn
Community Comment
May 10, 2016

This is Erin Dunn from the Fortuna Chamber of Commerce with a Community Comment.

Imagine Humboldt County being cut off from the North on Highway 101. Did you know it's a real possibility? Did you know you can help do something about it?

You've probably been hearing about Last Chance Grade on Highway 101 up near Crescent City. I don't know if it's because Last Chance Grade isn't in Humboldt County, but there seems to be a dangerous complacency here about the issue. And we will be more impacted by the loss of that stretch of Highway 101 than either Crescent City or Mendocino County.

What is Last Chance Grade? It's a stretch of Highway on 101 that is falling into the ocean.

You get the sense that something bad is happening when you drive that stretch of road. But when you see the photos taken from ocean level looking up, you KNOW something bad is going to happen.

This isn't a stretch of road that we simply detour around. Well, we can detour around it—via Interstate 5. This stretch of highway is bordered on the west by the ocean and on the east by an embankment of trees—a coastal mountain.

Since the time I've lived here, I had a sense that this county was made up of many isolationists. That they didn't care if we didn't have people or commerce coming in or out. Why? I've always thought it was because they didn't want their pot grows to be discovered or developed for anything other than their own gain.

The physical address of Last Chance Grade may not be Humboldt County, but the people who will suffer the most economically IS Humboldt County.

Now that the faux environmentalists are moving on to Sacramento—or are about to—we can see that the failure to move on this tragic development earlier is going to have a huge impact on Humboldt County.

I just had someone in the Chamber office yesterday asking about that stretch of road. They drove down from Tacoma and were excited to spend time in the Redwoods. She said it made her sick to her stomach to see how the road was deteriorating. They are doing the Lost Coast Loop today, and while they were excited to spend time in the Redwoods on the way back home, they were now going to cut over to Redding and take I-5 home.

We cannot let this stretch of highway go away. You have heard radio spots urging you to write your Congressional representatives—Congressman Huffman and Senators Boxer and Senator Feinstein. Now is the time to do it. Their addresses are listed every week in the Times-Standard. Or, you can call the Fortuna Chamber office and we'll give them to you.

We want to be a niche manufacturing hub—but we can't be that hub without a way to get our goods out of the County. And, if it helps the argument at all, we won't be able to get our pot goods out of the county once marijuana is legalized.

Please don't let the dire situation of this stretch of highway get to the point where we won't have a road at all before you act. We are coming up on the last chance to make an impact on Last Chance Grade.

This has been Erin Dunn with a Community Comment.