

Community Comment – March 13<sup>th</sup>, 2017

By Jon Sapper

Last Chance Grade....Again

Many of the Community Comments I have made over the years have been related to the things we run into on a daily basis. Whether it's been talking about the joys and travails of taking care of a pet that's smarter than I am; or, the benefits of living on the North Coast; or, the challenges we face in our community with those who are homeless or debilitated by the terrible disease of mental illness or addiction; or, the numerous customer service or lack thereof experiences, some of which are humorous,..... mostly after the fact, I have tried to cover a variety of topics that might be of interest to you or generate a smile. I have not wanted to be a one trick pony.

But, for this Community Comment, I'm going to repeat a topic I've covered before and make a statement as strongly as I can. It's about the Last Chance Grade; you know that section of Highway 101 just south of Crescent City that is failing. There may be other Community Commenters who will weigh in on this issue and that would be good. A lot of people have been talking about the impact of not having Highway 101 for an extended period of time, likely years. Community leaders from business, education and government have raised their voices and called for immediate action BEFORE this mountain slides into the ocean. Notice I didn't say if. This section of freeway is moving now and has been for quite some time. Individuals whose expertise I respect confide in me saying.... "This is going to happen and it's only a matter of time." Why on earth there isn't some movement (no pun intended) with this critical situation is beyond me. Now, maybe there's a smoke filled room somewhere in Sacramento where legislators, engineers, geologists and finance folks are actively working to fast track a solution for the bypass that has to be built. I hope there is, but I'm not holding my breath. If there is this smoke filled room and plans ARE being put in place to immediately start working on the bypass, please let us know to ease the growing fears in our communities. This thing is scaring the begiiiiiiiiiiiiii out of us up here in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties.

I traveled over this road a week ago and can tell the difference in pavement slippage from just a month or so ago. I really don't want to drive over it again.

The time for talking is over. The time for action is now. To let this go any more without immediate action is a dereliction of duty and a dismissal of moral responsibility for those in positions of power who are able to make this happen.

I only hope and pray that when this mountain does give way, there are no innocent lives lost by the apparent inaction.

This has been Jon Sapper for Community Comment.