

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**DISTRICT 9**

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FEB 12 2014
MONO COUNTY
Community Development

February 7, 2014

Mr. Scott Burns
Executive Director
Mono County Local Transportation Commission
P.O. Box 347
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546

Dear Mr. Burns:

Thank you for your letter of January 16, 2014 concerning State Highways under winter closure. As you are aware, the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is responsible for State Route (SR) 120 from the gate at Tioga Pass down to US 395. The opening of the Tioga Pass gate and the highway (Tioga Road – not a State Highway) through Yosemite National Park are both controlled by the National Park Service (NPS) as they are the owner and operator of that road.

SR 120 is designated by Caltrans as a Snow Route Classification “E”, a winter closure route. Caltrans’ policy for class “E” routes is that they are to be closed for the winter after the first significant snow, and are opened in the spring when it is reasonable to assume the storm possibilities are over.

Caltrans balances the operation of our snow routes based on overall needs and taking into account the following factors:

- Average Daily Traffic (ADT)
- Congestion and traffic safety
- Worker Safety
- Availability of alternate routes
- Consequences of not providing the desired level of service
- Public interests and concerns
- Potential economic impacts
- Environmental considerations

Final determinations in levels of service will consider cost and budgetary constraints.

Caltrans recognizes the desire of Mono County to have the winter routes reopened and we have endeavored to be flexible and to meet those desires as much as feasible. To date we have intermittently opened SR 270 - Bodie Road, SR 89 – Monitor Pass, and SR 158 - June Lake Loop. While SR 120 west has unique challenges which are not easily overcome in the winter season, we strive to open SR 120 west by the end of April for the opening of fishing season.

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Every year Caltrans coordinates with the NPS and Mono County in preparing to open SR 120 and Tioga Road. When Tioga Road through the park is not open in the winter, the resources and efforts needed to keep SR 120 west open, and the residual risk to the travelling public and Caltrans' workers, are not warranted for the little amount of traffic anticipated.

If you have further concerns or questions please contact Mr. Craig Holste, Deputy District Director Maintenance and Operations at 760-872-0670.

Yours truly,



THOMAS P. HALLENBECK
District 9 Director

c: Mono LTC
Mono County Board of Supervisors
Town of Mammoth Lakes
Yosemite National Park