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**Office of the
Mayor**

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April 9, 2013

Ms. Terri King
Executive Director
Kings County Association of Governments
339 W. D. Street, Suite B
Lemoore, CA 93245

RE: Caltrans Partnership Grant Application:

State Route 198 Corridor Preservation and Improvement Strategic Plan

Dear Ms. King:

As State Route 198 (SR 198) is a critical east-west roadway connecting State Route 99 to Interstate 5 through Fresno, Kings, and Tulare Counties, and as SR 198 is essential in moving people and goods through the region and to points beyond, and as SR 198 is the primary transportation and re-supply corridor supporting the Navy's essential aviation facilities at the Lemoore Naval Air Station; it is essential to the public and private interests to seek every avenue to improve the effectiveness and safety of the highway.

The SR 198 Corridor System Management Plan (CSMP) prepared by Caltrans Staff identifies the corridor as a "key east-west corridor, while at the same time describing it as "a smaller two-lane facility that is not suitable to carry existing heavy traffic/truck volumes and will also experience substantial truck growth into the future."

The CSMP recommends that the next step for SR 198 is to propose and implement an alternative mix of incremental and lower cost/higher benefit improvements, strategies, and actions to optimize corridor performance and promote the highest sustained safety, productivity, and reliability of the highway. We agree with the position of the transportation planning agencies that the best approach to accomplishing this step is to start with the preparation of a study that will evaluate the safety and effectiveness of SR 198, that will update the highway information, and will establish a set of performance measures to prioritize a list of recommended projects for incremental improvements and leading to the (CSMP) established ultimate design, while at the same time meeting the freight corridor requirements included in the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century (MAP-21) legislation.

Additionally, as the economic vitality of the region is dependent on the efficient flow of goods and services to and from this area and a reduction in traffic delays and efficient goods movement plays a role in efforts to reduce the region's high unemployment rate. Improvements to SR 198 will

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be a key factor in the potential for economic development for the project area and areas connected to the corridor.

On behalf of the City of Lemoore, we strongly support the application and the goals of the project and recommend that Caltrans award the requested grant funding for the **State Route 198 Corridor Preservation and Improvement Strategic Plan**.

Sincerely,

William M. Siegel Jr.
Mayor