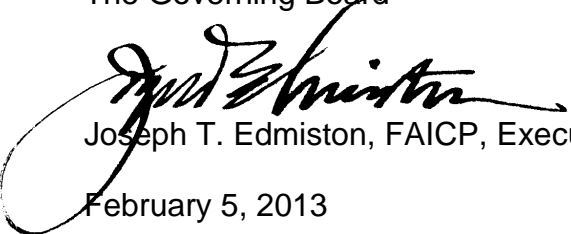


## MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

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### MEMORANDUM

TO: The Governing Board

FROM:   
Joseph T. Edmiston, FAICP, Executive Officer

DATE: February 5, 2013

SUBJECT: **Agenda Item VIII: Consideration of resolution authorizing entering into a Cooperative Agreement with the California Department of Transportation for preparation of a Project Scoping Report for wildlife crossings on the 101 freeway at Liberty Canyon, Agoura Hills.**

Staff Recommendation: That the Governing Board adopt the attached resolution authorizing entering into a Cooperative agreement with the California Department of Transportation for preparation of a Project Scoping Report for wildlife crossings on the 101 freeway at Liberty Canyon, Agoura Hills.

Background: The Liberty Canyon cross-101-freeway is the most ecologically significant habitat linkage between the Santa Monica Mountains and the Simi Hills. This location is identified by the South Coast Missing Linkages Project, the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project, and the National Park Service animal tracking studies as a critical wildlife linkage. The 101 freeway is a formidable barrier for wildlife and has caused fragmentation affecting mountain lion, American badger, mule deer, bobcat, coyote, and other smaller species population dispersal, genetic exchange and behaviors.

In order for the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to move forward with the feasibility analysis of either constructing an under or over crossing on Highway 101 the local agency planning the project must enter into a Cooperative Agreement with Caltrans. A Cooperative Agreement between Caltrans and a local agency is required when the local agency proposes to do work on State highways. Caltrans uses Cooperative Agreements as a tool to define a working relationship with another public agency when there is an exchange of effort, funding, or materials for accomplishing a project. It does not justify or define a project. The purpose of a Cooperative Agreement is to get an approved Project Study Report, a Caltrans internal document, authorizing the next planning and design level. The proposed action authorizes such action.