

**If you care about Mono Lake...
please plan to attend a very important Caltrans' public hearing
on the Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project!**

When and Where?

Wednesday October 29, 2003 from 4:00 pm to 7:00 pm
At the Lee Vining Community Center, 296 Mattly Avenue, Lee Vining, CA 93541

What is the project and what are the impacts?

The Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project proposes to widen shoulders, add pullouts, and straighten Hwy 395 for a 2.9 mile section along the scenic west shore of Mono Lake. **The potential and probable impacts associated with the planned construction are significant: fill slopes down to Mono Lake, impacts to wetland areas, retaining walls visible throughout the Mono Basin Scenic Area, and an increase in traffic speed.**

The Mono Lake Committee has been working with Caltrans and other agencies for over three years attempting to shape the project so that highway improvement goals are balanced with protection of the scenic and environmental resources at Mono Lake.

Why attend?

Caltrans has just completed and released a Draft Environmental Impact Report on the Mono Lake Shoulder Widening Project, which is now available for public comment. The public hearing on **October 29th is a critical time for the public to participate** by submitting verbal or written comments on the potential impacts of the project. The hearing is also a time to find out more information about the project, to raise concerns, and to have your questions answered. Your verbal comments during the hearing and/or your written comments submitted later by December 1, 2003 must be addressed by Caltrans in the Final Environmental Impact Report document for this project.

Important points to make

Any project Caltrans proposes near Mono Lake must:

- **Comply with the existing protections at Mono Lake.** For example, the Mono Basin Scenic Area Management Plan requires that Caltrans minimize or eliminate both visual impacts and disturbances to habitat areas. And the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board does not want fill slopes toward the lake to be considered.
- Protect the sensitive and **unique wetland and riparian habitat areas** that are highly productive for wildlife and birds.
- Significantly **reduce or eliminate visual impacts** such as cut slopes, fill slopes, and retaining walls as these would have a negative effect on the visitor experience.
- Recognize and respect the tranquil and rural character of this stretch of Hwy 395 and do **not increase the design speed** which then increases the actual motorist speed.
- Address the potential for an **increase in wildlife deaths** resulting from high retaining walls and an increase in traffic speed.
- Determine and **commit to design exceptions** (environmentally sensitive variations to Caltrans' *Highway Design Manual* construction standards) *during the environmental review process* – not after the project begins – or worse, not at all.

Questions? If you have questions regarding this project, please contact Lisa Cutting (lisa@monolake.org) at the Mono Lake Committee (760) 647-6595. Information and links to the DEIR are on our website: www.monolake.org