

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0549

March 12, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

I write with concern about a recent report¹ that the Transportation Corridor Agencies (TCA) have potentially overspent and misused public funds while promoting a toll road project in south Orange County, which is part of the 49th Congressional District. TCA's actions appear to be a betrayal of the public trust. I urge you to ensure that appropriate ethical and transparency measures are in place for Joint Powers Authorities authorized by the State of California such as TCA.

As you may know, TCA is comprised of two Joint Powers Authorities that operate in Orange County. A 1987 state law allows TCA to build and manage toll roads throughout the county. TCA has been entrusted with operating four roads, which now constitute 20 percent of the county's limited-access highway system. As referenced previously, the agency is currently pursuing plans to build another toll road in my district but has faced multiple lawsuits alleging violations of public input and transparency laws.

Reports indicate that TCA's inappropriate actions go further than had been previously alleged. A story published on March 11, 2019 in the *Los Angeles Times* uncovered that TCA officials allowed for the potential misuse of hundreds of thousands of dollars in public funds. This took the form of gross overpayments to consultants with little demonstrable benefit to the public. Examples from the *Times* report include payments totaling \$230,000 for TCA's consultants to read "emails of news from transportation stories" and \$14,000 for the agency's own consultants to meet with each other. This waste of taxpayer dollars is at best irresponsible and at worst evidence of greater impropriety.

TCA's actions undermine public confidence and cannot be tolerated. I ask that you exercise your oversight authority in this situation and move to ensure that similar breaches are precluded in the future.

I look forward to working with you to ensure that this matter is handled appropriately. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or to direct your staff to contact my office at (202) 225-3906.

Sincerely,



MIKE LEVIN
Member of Congress

¹ Elmahrek, Adam. March 11, 2019. "The battle to tame O.C. traffic now rages over fees for high-priced consultants." *Los Angeles Times*.