

Marine Corps Installations West and Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton would like to present the Marine Corps' perspective on the 241 Toll Road project and the Transportation Corridor Agencies attempt to extend the 241 from its current terminus in Rancho Santa Margarita to south Orange County where the toll road would eventually connect with Interstate 5 on Camp Pendleton.

It is very important first to understand the mission of Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton. Camp Pendleton provides high quality ranges, training areas and facilities to the operating forces so our Marines and Sailors can prepare to execute any required mission. The skills they learn and practice here enable them to defeat our nation's enemies and save the lives of our Marines and Sailors on the battlefield. We owe the sons and daughters of America who have volunteered in service of this nation the finest training possible.

The history of Orange County and TCA efforts to extend the 241 goes back about 30 years when in 1981, Orange County officials adopted a proposed alignment of the entire 241 by putting the toll road on the County's Master Plan of Arterial Highways.

Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton first became aware of Orange County's vision of building a toll road through the Base's property in 1984, 26 years ago. The Marine Corps' initially opposed the Orange County, and later, TCA proposal. However, the Marine Corps did offer the possibility of accommodation in mid-1988 when the Commandant of the Marine Corps stated that on-base routing might be possible, but only if the toll road could be located on an area of the base that did not negatively impact Camp Pendleton's training mission. The only viable option in the view of the Marine Corps would be to route it somewhere within the State Park's 1,300 acre lease of base property east of I-5. The Marine Corps' position has been consistent throughout our involvement with this proposed toll road project.

Camp Pendleton has a long history of sharing its 200 square miles of federal land with non-military agencies when doing so would not negatively impact its mission. The San Onofre Nuclear Power Plant and the 2,000-acre San Onofre State Park lease on Camp Pendleton are two such examples. However, the deciding factor in any Camp Pendleton agreement to share its land resources with an outside agency is the strict stipulation that any non-Marine Corps related uses of Base land not impact the mission of Camp Pendleton.

The Marine Corps has never wavered on its position regarding a potential Camp Pendleton alignment of the toll road during its 26-year history with this project. Following almost 10 years of environmental analysis by a collaborative group of federal agencies, including the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Fisheries Service, and the Federal Highway Administration, this group concluded that the least environmentally damaging and most practical alignment alternative for the 241 extension was to build it through the State Park lease area on Camp Pendleton. Because this alignment also met all previously expressed Marine Corps stipulations, the proposed routing through the State Park lease area was viewed as acceptable to Camp Pendleton.

Ultimately, however, this proposed State Park alignment was denied by the California Coastal Commission, which then led the TCA to propose a new toll road route through a vital training area on Camp Pendleton. The newest TCA toll road plan suggests that it be located outside the State Park

lease area of Camp Pendleton by pushing the alignment further into the Base. While the new alignment may be acceptable from the State Park's perspective, it is not acceptable to Camp Pendleton or the Marine Corps as it does not meet the Marine Corps' long maintained stipulation that this proposed project not negatively impact the Base mission. The TCA's new proposed route does, in fact, create negative impacts, which explains the reason behind the Secretary of the Navy's recent letter to Senator Feinstein expressing the Department of the Navy's non-support of the new alignment.

In our view it's time for the TCA to find another alternative to it's current proposed alignment of the 241 Toll Road through vital training areas on Camp Pendleton.

Preservation of the Marine Corps' ability to prepare Marines and Sailors for combat and future deployments to serve in our nation's interest remains the primary concern of Camp Pendleton. The Marine Corps has enjoyed a long and successful partnership with the communities of Southern California. We provide tremendous economic benefit to our surrounding communities and to the region. We are good stewards of the environment, and take the lead in environmental and energy conservation programs. We will continue to be good neighbors and trust the public to understand the critical nature and urgency of our mission as our Marines deploy to current conflicts and prepare for future ones, and therefore any loss of valuable training areas is not acceptable.

There is a solemn covenant between our citizens and their Marines: We will fight and win our Nation's battles. That same covenant creates a bond between every Marine and their Commander: We will train to such an extraordinary level of competence that every Marine who faces an enemy does so with the self-confidence that his training provides the edge that will allow him to prevail. Without the active and robust training facility that is Camp Pendleton, that covenant will be fractured and our Nation will be less secure.



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