



March 12, 1991

Department of the Army
Sacramento District Corps of Engineers
650 Capitol Mall
Sacramento, CA 95814-4794

Attn: Environmental Resources Branch

Dear Sirs:

It has come to our attention that the City of Santa Rosa and Caltrans are studying the possibility of the Highway 101 by-pass around the City, to be located in the Eastern portion of the Laguna de Santa Rosa flood basin. A copy of the *Press Democrat* news release of March 7, 1991 is enclosed.

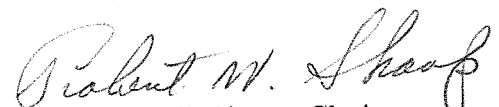
Such a project would have a devastating effect on the entire Laguna ecosystem. Namely, loss of critical flood storage capacity, destruction of marshes and vernal pool areas, and a marked reduction in its value as a community separator.

The Laguna has been badly encroached upon ever since western man first arrived in the area, over 150 years ago. To compound this problem by placing a major highway through the flood basin is almost unthinkable. Certainly it would nullify the plans of California Fish and Game Department, and the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service to create a major wetlands area in the Laguna.

The high level of public interest in the Laguna is evident by the fact that since 1975, five separate studies of the Laguna have been carried out by private and governmental bodies. Almost all of these studies have indicated the need for public ownership of much of the Laguna, either by California Fish and Game Department or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife, or a combination of the two agencies. The California Fish and Game Department already owns a substantial acreage in the Laguna Basin.

In view of the high level of adverse environmental impact of this project, we hope that Corps of Engineers will play a major role in the final decision-making on this proposal.

Very truly yours,


Robert W. Sharp, Chairman