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Devon Miller / KHTS News



\$247 Million Allocated For 5 Freeway Improvement In Santa Clarita

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It was announced Wednesday that \$247 million was allocated for improving the 5 Freeway between the Newhall Pass and Castaic, officials said.

An allocation to the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority of \$247 million was approved by the California Transportation Commission (CTC) Wednesday at its regularly scheduled meeting, conducted via teleconference and webcast.

The funds are to be applied toward construction costs for planned Interstate 5 improvements through the Santa Clarita Valley. The grant was awarded in mid-2018 in response to a joint application by L.A. Metro, Caltrans and the Los Angeles Department of Public Works.

"It's going toward a 679mil project, along with other sources of funding," said Victor Lindenheim, executive director of the Golden State Gateway Coalition. "The elements of the project are carpool lanes of 13.5 miles from Newhall to Castaic, truck lanes, auxiliary lanes and sound walls from cars moving at decent speeds."

Seven bridges are to be widened and access to a weigh station will be enhanced. The project addresses congestion and safety challenges in the corridor while creating jobs, expediting freight movement and improving safety, according to an official release.

"It will also create thousands of jobs," Lindenheim added. "Somewhere between 4,000 and 6,000 jobs, directly and indirectly."

The funding for this project came from sales taxes in Los Angeles County. The approved CTC allotment comes from the state's Trade Corridor Enhancement Program, funded by SB-1, gas tax dollars. Additional funding for the \$679 million I-5 improvement project will come from Measure M and Measure R county sales tax revenue and a federal grant secured with the assistance of then-Congressman Steve Knight and Supervisor Kathryn Barger, according to the release.

L.A. Metro is planning to release the construction bid package this summer. Construction is anticipated to begin in 2021 and completion of the project is anticipated for 2024-2025.

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