

## Officials promise expedited process for Last Chance Grade

November 8, 2019



In a historic meeting, all the officials involved in the Last Chance Grade Project gathered in one place to discuss the project's future on Wednesday, Nov. 6.

“Tonight’s meeting is critically important,” said Senator Mike McGuire, as the meeting began.

Congressman Jared Huffman, Senator Mike McGuire, Assemblyman Jim Wood, Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, Crescent City officials, members Caltrans and the California Transportation Commission assembled for a community meeting at the Del Norte County fairgrounds Wednesday evening.

“We knew there were a lot of people working on the project. It was good to see them here and know they’re committed,” said Tami Petty, a meeting attendee.

Last Chance Grade is a three-mile section of Highway 101 between Klamath and Crescent City that is, and has been for years, slowly sliding into the ocean. The road is currently being maintained just enough for traffic to continue, but residents are desperate for other solutions so as not to risk their primary road closing.

Families from Klamath commute to Crescent City weekly, even daily, for groceries, school, work and more. Without Highway 101 connecting them, the drive from Klamath to Crescent City could take upwards of 6 hours, according to McGuire.

“We are talking about a lifeline to our community. We don’t want this. We need this,” said Crescent City Mayor Blake Inscore. “Faire is not an option for us and it’s not an option for our community.”

Residents at the meeting spoke up about hearing officials talk about Last Chance Grade for years with little action, but all of the speakers assured residents that they are now working on the project with utmost speed.

Residents seemed found their answers satisfactory, as long as they follow through with the plans and continue to expedite the process.

Resident Bill Petty said he found the meeting overall positive “as long as they follow through with what they say.”

Last Chance Grade Project Manager Jaime Matteoli presented some of the ways in which they are accelerating the project, including conducting the environmental, geotechnical and design phases concurrently. Additionally, they will have the same team working on all the phases so they can complete the phases more quickly.

Residents could see construction beginning as early as 2030, according to Jaime Matteoli, the Last Chance Grade project manager, but before any construction, they need to complete the extensive studies and secure the funds. They already have 50 million dollars committed for environmental review, but they will need to acquire funds for Washington D.C. to complete the project.