



SERVICE AUTHORITY FOR FREEWAY EMERGENCIES (SAFE)
Call Box Program for Merced County

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MEETING PURPOSE

To obtain public input on the proposed removal of freeway call boxes in Merced County.

1. What is the call box program?
2. Why was it created?
3. Why remove them?
4. Public comments and questions

What is the call box program?

- Network of 88 call boxes on Interstate 5, Highway 99 and Highway 152
 - 70 along Highway 152 and Interstate 5
 - 18 on Highway 99
- Implemented in 2000-2001
- Joint project of MCAG, Caltrans and the California Highway Patrol

Why was the call box program created?

- To provide motorists in need with a 24-hour direct link to the Highway Patrol dispatch
- Existing law authorizes the creation of a Service Authority for Freeway Emergencies (SAFE)
 - MCAG is the designated SAFE for Merced County
 - Program is funded through a \$1 vehicle registration fee

Why remove the call boxes?

- Call boxes are under-utilized
 - Obsolete with prevalence of cell phones
- Existing boxes need to be upgraded
 - 3G cell phone technology
 - \$750-\$1000 per box (\$66,000 - \$88,000)
- Recent amendment to the law allows for alternative uses for the funding

NEXT STEPS

1. Solicit public input on proposed removal
2. Develop and implement plan to remove and/or upgrade call boxes in Merced County
3. Develop proposed alternative uses for funding to better serve the region
4. Solicit public input on alternatives
5. Obtain final approval for plan of action from MCAG Governing Board

Comments and Questions?