

Supervisors level sharp criticism at Caltrans, CCWD

By Nick Baptista / The Valley Springs News / April 17, 2026

Two sister public entities – Caltrans and the Calaveras County Water District – were the subjects of rebuke at Tuesday’s meeting of the Calaveras County Board of Supervisors.

The board was receiving a presentation of the proposed Department of Public Works Capital Improvement Program for the next five years when District 1 Supervisor Gary Tofanelli leveled criticism of Caltrans’ recent work at the intersection of State Route 12/26 and the Valley Oaks Shopping Center and District 5 Supervisor Benjamin Stopper complained about CCWD’s adverse impact on his constituents stemming from the district’s ongoing Jenny Lind – Rancho Calaveras A-B Water Transmission Pipeline Project.

The Capital Improvement Program focuses on identifying, developing and implementing significant infrastructure improvement project – most of which are transportation related – within the county.

When Public Work Director Micah Martin mentioned another delay on plans to resurface Hartvickson Lane and Baldwin Street in Rancho Calaveras, Supervisor Stopper expressed his displeasure.

Martin said county public works was at the mercy of the water district as they had to make changes to earlier plans and pause construction for a period of time.

“It’s disappointing for my district because we have been waiting on those for too long,” Stopper said. “It’s been seven years of delay and now they kick the can again for what?”

The torn up streets, especially along Hartvickson, have been hard on everyone’s vehicles, he added, including his, and full street closures have been inconvenient to residents.

Tofanelli voiced his concerns that Caltrans has not fully grasped the impact the traffic signal being installed at the shopping center will have on downtown Valley Springs commuter traffic in the mornings and evenings.

Caltrans has not done a study on how the signal will impact traffic at the nearby downtown four-way stop, he said, something he has asked them to do for the last year and a half, and they may do one after the lights are operational.

Stopper interjected that weekday morning traffic is already backing up south of the traffic signal at State Route 29 and Vista Del Lago Drive, nearly two miles away from downtown Valley Springs.

“They (Caltrans) seem to just do what they want to do without even consulting like the supervisors or even the community on what they think and how it’s going to affect their daily commute,” Tofanelli said.

The proposed 2026 Capital Improvement Program has 13 new projects added to the list, one of which is called the Valley Springs Circulation Realignment Highway 26 bypass, a possible solution to commuter-time congestion in downtown Valley Springs.

Tofanelli said he was glad to see it on the list and Caltrans needs to be involved and provide some of the funding for such a project.

Tofanelli concluded his remarks about the downtown traffic problem being exacerbated by the new traffic signal by saying, “I’m going to tell you it’s going to be chaos coming forward.”