



FORT BRAGG POLICE DEPARTMENT

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Director Tavares:

On the night of December 7, 2024, Roy Mora, a 15-year-old boy, went missing in Fort Bragg. During the two-week search for him, video surveillance showed him walking onto the Noyo River Bridge (SR-1), but never leaving. His phone was later found on the bridge by a passerby. On the morning of December 23, 2024, human remains washed ashore under the bridge which were consistent with that of a human body in being in the ocean for two weeks. The remains were identified as Roy Mora by dental records. The surveillance video of Roy walking onto the bridge and disappearing into the dark will be the last image Roy's mother has of him.

The current Noyo River Bridge was completed in 2005 and was the impetus for Caltrans approving a new design for bridge railings (ST-10) to preserve the sightlines for motorists. While beautiful, this design with 42 inch high railings allows one to easily climb over and jump from the bridge, which is 110 feet above the water. The article "*Fall from heights: does height really matter?*" in the European Journal of Trauma and Emergency Surgery (2018), reported that falls from 84 feet resulted in 90% lethality.

Since our report system only began in 2011, the Fort Bragg Police Department has responded to fifteen people with suicidal ideations and six completed suicides on the Noyo River Bridge. While far less than the Golden Gate Bridge, which was averaging over 33 suicides per year until the Suicide Deterrent Net was installed, the Noyo River Bridge is only 1/10th the length and surrounded by a fraction of the population of the San Francisco area. I have officers working for me now who have received medals for risking their safety to pull suicidal subjects from the rail. I also have officers who will have images of people escaping their grasp and falling to their death.

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Beyond intentional falls, should a vehicle strike a bicyclist in the unprotected bicycle lane, the bicyclist could be ejected over the low rail. Furthermore, we have had incidents of pedestrians throwing objects as large as a bicycle onto the recreational, commercial fishing, and US Coast Guard boats traveling below.

For these reasons, I implore you to begin the process of installing a Suicide Deterrent Net on the Noyo River Bridge similar to the one completed recently on the Golden Gate Bridge. The Golden Gate is far more famous and in a more populated area. It was well known as a location to commit suicide. Partly because of the media focus and partly because of the enormous population with easy access to it. The Noyo River Bridge is in a city of only 7,000, yet suicide contemplations and completions are becoming common. Due to the lack of witnesses, no video surveillance on the bridge and remoteness, that number could be much higher based on the amount of missing people on the Mendocino Coast.

The Suicide Deterrent Net on the Golden Gate Bridge is a minimalist design, maintaining the sightlines for motorists and pedestrians, keeping an unimpeded view of our beautiful coastline. The marine grade stainless steel netting will withstand our harsh, salt-air climate reducing the need for maintenance. Most importantly, it gives despondent people a second chance. The 1978 Seiden Study done at the Golden Gate Bridge showed 90% of those stopped from jumping did not go on to commit suicide at a later time. Mental health resources have improved dramatically since the study, ensuring those people have much better care following an attempt.

Director Tavares, I'm asking for your help to protect Californians and save lives. I look forward to working with you and Caltrans on this critical project.

Kind Regards,



Neil J. Cervenka
Chief of Police