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Statement from Save the Redwoods League regarding Caltrans' widening of Highway 101 in Richardson Grove State Park

San Francisco, Calif. (May 28, 2026) — Richardson Grove State Park is dear to our hearts. Save the Redwoods League was instrumental in protecting its old-growth coast redwoods, some of which stand taller than 300 feet, for generations of park visitors to enjoy. With only 5% of the original old-growth redwoods still standing across California, any action that can affect these ancient trees must be carefully scrutinized.

We have been closely following the [proposed realignment of Highway 101](#) since the project was first put forward in 2007. This project would widen the approximately 1.1-mile section of Highway 101 that runs through the park, which is at present too narrow to safely accommodate heavy traffic and larger vehicles. This creates safety concerns for park visitors who share the same road. Completion of the project requires the removal of a number of trees. After years of litigation and evaluations to limit environmental impact, the 2020 decision from the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals gave the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) legal grounds to move forward with this project in 2026.

Caltrans has stated that the Highway 101 realignment project will only require the [removal of 38 trees](#) of various species, including two second-growth redwoods of 4-8 inches in diameter, and that no old-growth redwoods will be removed. To minimize potential damage to ancient redwood root systems, Caltrans has also promised to only use hand tools instead of heavy machinery during construction. An independent arborist will also monitor all ground-disturbing activities throughout the project.

While these assurances are welcome, they do not guarantee that roadwork will not cause damage. Save the Redwoods League shares the deep concern of many who worry that this project will negatively impact Richardson Grove and urges Caltrans to adhere to their existing project design and not alter it in any way that would threaten the park's old-growth redwoods. While we do not applaud the removal of healthy trees, the tight, winding nature of the section of Highway 101 within the park is a known source of traffic accidents, including fatalities for park visitors. The old-growth redwoods alongside the highway have also been harmed by past vehicle collisions, so realignment of the road is not entirely unwarranted.

Save the Redwoods League applauds the efforts of partner environmental organizations to continue closely monitoring the progression of the Highway 101 realignment project. Their vigilance will ensure that the project complies with the required standards to minimize impact and is not altered in a way that results in further impacts on Richardson Grove State Park's old-growth redwoods.

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Save the Redwoods League revitalizes coast redwood and giant sequoia forests across California's redwood range. In partnership with state and federal agencies, Tribes, and communities, we have conserved more than 220,000 acres in 76 parks and preserves and restored 37,000 acres. Our work bolsters carbon storage, strengthens wildfire resilience, benefits local economies, and safeguards iconic landscapes enjoyed by millions. For more information, visit [SaveTheRedwoods.org](https://www.savetheredwoods.org)