

Published in the Marin Independent Journal and the Novato Advance in October 2001

Dear Editor:

On October 2, twenty-seven Marin County schools participated in a very successful event, International Walk to School Day. This event called much-needed attention to the fact that more children need safe alternative ways of getting to school. It's an undeniable fact in Marin: once school is back in session, traffic increases.

As the Chair of the Marin Congestion Management Agency (CMA), I know firsthand what a big problem this is in our county. Our studies show that 22% of peak morning congestion is due to parents driving their children to school.

The county has already made some progress through the Safe Routes to School program (which organized Walk to School Day in Marin), which encourages biking and walking to school when possible. At schools with a Safe Routes program in place, driving to school dropped by 30%. Although funding for this program has been expanded for the next two years, not every school has a Safe Routes program. Permanent funding is needed to bring these improvements countywide.

The CMA is looking for additional solutions to this problem. We're currently developing a countywide transit plan that will include ways to reduce school-related congestion. This may include shuttle buses or school buses, particularly for hill-dwelling children, and expansion of the Safe Routes program.

Every community in Marin has a school, so this is a program that will benefit us all.

Sincerely,

Steve Kinsey
Marin County Supervisor
Chair, Marin Congestion Management Agency