

# Caldwell chamber pleads for I-84 expansion

Dean Johnson , KTVB 5:26 PM. MST March 03, 2017



(Photo: KTVB)

CALDWELL - If you are a long-time commuter on Interstate 84 through Canyon County, you may agree with what the Caldwell Chamber of Commerce is saying now -- enough is enough.

The chamber is asking everyone to write to local lawmakers, as well as federal and state transportation agencies, and plead for them to widen a section of I-84 between Nampa and Caldwell.

For the 10-mile stretch between the Franklin exit in Nampa and the Franklin exit in Caldwell, the interstate is only two lanes, something the chamber is hoping to change, and change fast.

Caldwell Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Theresa Hardin says this section of road is hurting their economy.

She says many companies when they look to build or relocate will look at access to an interstate. And they want good and quick access. And she says if they can't get that why would they come to this area.

Hardin says during rush hour traffic along this stretch of I-84 can be backed up for miles, something that she suspects will only get worse with time.

"I don't think we'll ever catch up, that's the scary part," said Hardin. "If we have bottlenecks now, another five to ten years, what kind of traffic will we have then?"

COMPASS, an organization that works closely with local governments to plan for the future of the Treasure Valley, knows the importance of this stretch of roadway.

They have made it their number one unfunded project in the state.

The Idaho Transportation Department estimates to widen this section of highway will cost upwards of \$330 million.

ITD says all available funding statewide for road maintenance, bridge replacement, and safety improvements is \$300 million. They just don't have the funding to do this massive project.

Both COMPASS and ITD are working together to apply for grants or any other funding that may be available to try and widen this section of I-84, but as of right now it remains unfunded.

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