

Mrs. Baxter's Speech

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by Don Williams

The historic California Freeway Revolt of 1958-59 was instigated by Glen Park women, including Mrs. J. C. Baxter, who went to Sacramento to present this "Three-Minute" speech:

"Honorable Members of the California Legislative Committee on Freeway Locations:

"We represent over 1,700 residents of the Glen Park District who are opposed to the Bosworth Street section of the Southern Freeway, which is now under consideration. This freeway connects the Southern Freeway, which is now demolishing 800 houses, with the proposed Western Freeway, which is opposed by more than 25,000 residents of San Francisco. All three freeways are routed through established residential streets.

"Only 46 percent of the land in San Francisco is now taxable. If more freeways are built in San Francisco, more land will be taken from the assessment books. Consequently the remaining property owners will pay higher taxes.

"The proposed Crosstown Freeway would cost \$20 million just to save motorists three minutes' driving time! Is this necessary to the prosperity and future of San Francisco?

"We respectfully ask that your Committee and the California Legislature seriously consider the damage and hardship this project would impose on our district known as Glen Park. It would almost wipe out our thriving business section, which was established more than 60 years ago. We would lose about half of our shopping area: 14 business establishments have been marked to go,

120 buildings, our library and probably more.

"Many families will be displaced. Where can they find homes? Today's financing will work a tremendous hardship on these people. Most of their homes are paid for. The price paid by the State will only be a partial down payment, according to today's market, for homes large enough to accommodate their families.

"If the legislature should allocate the money (\$20 million) to build this proposed Crosstown Freeway, the planned overhead viaduct would rise 50 to 65 feet over the southern boundary of Glen Park Playground, cutting off the sunshine.

"Silvertree Children's Day Camp, used by all the recreation parks in the city, would be shaded also. About 150 children up to 12 years of age, each week during summer vacation, are given 5 days of truly outdoor living. For \$2 per week they receive bus transportation to and from all parts of the city, a hot lunch, crafts and nature lore. Parents who cannot afford to take their children out of the city for a vacation rely on the Silvertree Day Camp. Where else in San Francisco—or anywhere—can children climb hills, play and work all day in the fresh air under adult supervision?

"It is our earnest desire that you gentlemen of the California Legislature will give your most serious consideration to all these facts before approving any funds for this project. Does this contemplated saving of THREE MINUTES' driving time warrant such a vast expenditure of tax funds and the hardship and havoc that will inevitably result?

"[signed] Mrs. J. C. Baxter and friends."