

Central California's Highway 99: The Most Dangerous Major Highway in America



“The Central Valley’s Highway 99 is the deadliest major highway in the country, according to an analysis released Thursday.

The 400-mile route that cuts through Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto and other Valley cities as well as hundreds of miles of farmland had 62 fatal accidents per 100 miles over a recent five-year span, an analysis from Value Penguin shows.

Value Penguin is a private consumer-research organization based in New York that reviews personal finance products and does analyses on consumer-related topics. It reviewed the National Traffic and Highway Safety Administration fatal crash database, finding 264 fatal accidents between 2011 and 2015.

Fifty of those involved drunken driving. The highest concentration of fatalities, 35, was in the Modesto area. Interstate 45 in Texas has the second-highest rate of fatalities, 55 per 100 miles, followed by Interstate 95, which runs down the Eastern Seaboard from Maine to Florida.

California highway officials did not comment on the analysis Thursday, but said the state has been working for nearly a decade on a series of projects on Highway 99 to improve efficiency and safety.

The work is being financed by Proposition 1B, a \$20 billion state infrastructure bond measure approved by state voters in 2006 that included \$1 billion specifically for Highway 99 upgrades. That includes two recent interchange projects in the Elk Grove area. Caltrans officials locally said they also used bond funds to widen the freeway and build overpasses to eliminate stoplights and intersections between Yuba City and Sacramento.

“This is an opportunity to make sure everything is up to current standards moving forward,” Caltrans spokeswoman Angela DePrato said. At the same time, ‘Proposition 1B has definitely made enhancements to make it a safer commute for motorists.’” [Tony Bizjak, *Sacramento Bee*, October 14, 2016, p. 3A]

