

Caltrans sued over plan to widen Niles Canyon road

[Carolyn Jones, Chronicle Staff Writer](#)

June 8, 2011

An East Bay environmental group filed suit against Caltrans on Tuesday hoping to stop the proposed widening of Highway 84 through bucolic Niles Canyon.

The Alameda Creek Alliance says Caltrans' \$80 million project will have a calamitous effect on Alameda Creek, which flows through the canyon to the bay and is home to the endangered California red-legged frog and Alameda whipsnake, said the group's director, Jeff Miller.

"This is really an assault on the creek and Niles Canyon," he said. "It'll cause irreparable damage to the habitat there. It's an unacceptable project."

Citing safety concerns, Caltrans has been planning for more than a decade to widen that stretch of Highway 84, a twisting two-lane road connecting Fremont and Sunol. From 1998 to 2008, Niles Canyon Road saw 436 crashes resulting in 13 deaths, according to Caltrans.

Caltrans hopes to fill in the creek banks with concrete and boulders, build 30-foot retaining walls, replace a bridge and add shoulders. For every tree that is removed, Caltrans said it will plant three to five replacements in the Alameda Creek watershed.

Miller's group plans to ask the court later this week for an injunction to immediately stop the project.