



Resolution #HSRA 17-02

Concurrence with the Staff Recommended Preferred Alternative for the Merced to Fresno Project Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

Whereas, on May 3, 2012, the Authority adopted Resolutions #HSRA 12-19 and 12-20 certifying the Merced to Fresno Section Final Environmental Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS), approving a north-south alternative for the Merced to Fresno Section, and deferring a decision on the Wye to future environmental analysis (which staff subsequently identified would be a Merced to Fresno Central Valley Wye Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (MF Wye SEIR/SEIS));

Whereas, the Final EIR/EIS evaluated two Wye alignments but the Authority Board in Resolution #HSRA 12-20 directed staff to study Wye alternative alignments further;

Whereas, since that time the Authority has continued to work with community stakeholders and regulatory agencies to evaluate 17 separate alternatives, and has documented that development in a Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Way Alternative Supplemental Alternative Analysis Report and a Merced to Fresno Section: Wye Alternatives Supplemental Checkpoint B Summary Report (including three addendums);

Whereas, staff has screened the 17 alternatives and narrowed them to the following four alternatives for evaluation in the forthcoming MF Wye Draft SEIR/SEIS: 1) SR 152 (North) to Road 11 2) SR 152 (North) to Road 13; 3) SR 152 (North) to Road 19; and 4) Ave 21 to Road 13;

Whereas, the Authority has conducted preliminary environmental, project objective and stakeholder input evaluation to a level sufficient to describe the initial comparative differences between the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative and the three other alternatives described above;

Whereas, stakeholder input has been carefully considered;

Whereas, the preliminary analyses indicate that the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative strikes the best balance among the project objectives, environmental impacts to natural resources and community concerns, and stakeholder input, and also has the lowest construction costs;

Whereas, the Board has delegated to staff the authority to develop draft environmental documents;

Whereas, the Board has retained authority to identify a preferred alternative in a draft environmental document;

Whereas, staff has identified the public transparency benefits of sharing the analysis that has been conducted to this point, and of identifying a preferred alternative in the forthcoming MF Wye Draft SEIR/SEIS;

Whereas, the identification of the preferred alternative at this time is not a final decision by this Board and allows for full consideration of all the impacts of the alternatives considered in the still-ongoing environmental process; and,

Whereas, the Authority recognizes the function of the forthcoming MF Wye Draft SEIR/SEIS is to elicit public comments prior to the Authority making any final decision.

Therefore, it is resolved:

The Authority finds that identifying a preferred alternative in the forthcoming MF Wye Draft SEIR/SEIS will facilitate public comments on the document.

The Authority Board concurs with the staff recommendation that the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative shall be identified as the Preferred Alternative in the forthcoming MF Wye Draft SEIR/SEIS.

The Authority Board directs staff to complete preparation of and circulate the MF Wye Draft SEIR/SEIS for public comment.

The Authority Board directs staff to work with federal partners, including the FRA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to facilitate their preliminary identification under the federal Clean Water Act of the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative as the least environmentally damaging practicable alternative (LEDPA) for the Central Valley Wye, consistent with the Board's direction in this Resolution.

The Authority Board further directs staff to continue to collaborate with local stakeholders to seek to address concerns about high-speed rail within their communities.

Vote:

Yes:

No:

Absent:

Date:

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