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CONTACT: Victoria Grajek (916) 319-2017

Assemblymember Galgiani Statement on Resignation of High Speed Rail Director Roelof Van Ark, and Stepping Down of Board Chair Tom Umberg

SACRAMENTO, CA- Assemblymember Cathleen Galgiani, an Author of the High Speed Rail Bond Proposition 1A, responds to the resignation of High Speed Rail Director Roelof Van Ark, and Stepping Down of Board Chair Tom Umberg, calling it a “key turning point giving Governor Jerry Brown the opportunity to put his resources behind the success of the program.”

“I am grateful to Mr. Van Ark and Chair Umberg for their tireless efforts and tenacity during the most critical early stages of taking High Speed Rail from a vision, to reality, bringing us “high-speed jobs” with the start of construction in September 2012.

“We have always known there would be challenging circumstances building the nation’s first high-speed Rail system, particularly when it requires being sensitive and responsive to diverse communities, with varying needs along the entire 800 mile stretch of the project all at once. Mr. Van Ark and Mr. Umberg have worked with stakeholders to address everything from whether “wind speed” from the train will affect bee pollination in agricultural areas, the importance of respecting sacred sites and Native American burial grounds near the Grapevine, the value we place on involving small emerging business enterprises during the engineering and construction contracting process, building the first public private partnership of this scope in California, and navigating the political turbulence associated with building the nation’s first High –Speed Rail system. I have deep respect and owe my deepest gratitude to both Mr. Van Ark and Mr. Umberg.”

Governor Brown has been a vocal supporter of the project, and last year and appointed two advisers, Dan Richard and Mike Rossi, to the rail board. Board Member Richard will serve as the new Chair of the Authority Board.

“Today represents a turning point for the Governor to put his stamp on the project. I am pleased that his long-trusted Advisor, Dan Richard, has been chosen to succeed Chair Umberg, and I am confident that Governor Brown will put his full resources behind the success of High Speed Rail. I remain committed to working with Governor Brown, and Chair Richard to move this project forward and put California’s economy on a fast-track to recovery with “high speed jobs.”