



June 2, 2015

Mr. Dan Richard
Chairman, California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Richard:

As regional representatives for every community impacted by the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (Authority) proposed routes between Palmdale and Burbank, we would like to first thank you for taking the time to visit the impacted areas along both corridors and hear the concerns of our local stakeholders in face-to-face meetings. Your personal attention to the potential impacts to homes, businesses, churches, equestrian activities, ecological resources and quality of life in all of the potentially impacted areas is very much appreciated.

While the Authority's staff has worked diligently over many months to meet with local residents and jurisdictions to gather input and improve the potential routes in incremental fashion, we are still concerned that the current alignments have many flaws which will require attention from and mitigation by the Authority as we move forward in the environmental process. We write jointly to express concerns we share with our communities about the proposed alignments as they are currently configured and will be presented to the Authority Board of Directors at its June 9th, 2015 meeting.

SR-14 Corridor

The current at-grade alignment through the San Fernando Valley communities of Sylmar, San Fernando, and Pacoima remains untenable for the residents and businesses that will be severely impacted by the construction of the project, including the railroad and grade separation structures. If this corridor is to advance in the environmental process, at the very least it needs to be converted to a tunnel-only alignment that will not disrupt the economic vitality and quality of life of these communities. As it currently stands, the at-grade alignment is unsupportable.

In the Santa Clarita Valley, the Authority has proposed two alternatives through the Sand Canyon area – SCS and SCLT. The primary difference is the SCS will take out homes and displace residents while the SCLT will daylight north of this same residential community. To protect this community and reduce the impacts to the residents, we ask that the Authority remove SCS from consideration at this time and study only SCLT moving forward.

In the Acton and Agua Dulce area, the Authority has removed from consideration routes which created greater impacts to the residents, businesses, and schools in this area. However, the remaining alignment still raises concerns about impacts to the rural character of this region. Please continue to work with these communities to mitigate the impacts of the at-grade/above-grade sections which travel near or over SR-14 for this alignment.

East Corridor

For the East Corridor routes, we are pleased the Authority converted options E-1 and E-3 into tunnel routes between Palmdale and Burbank. However, the presence of E-2 at this stage of the environmental process raises tremendous concerns for the Shadow Hills and Lake View Terrace communities as the tunnel portals, bridge and at-grade alignment will create severe impacts to homes and the quality of life in this part of the County. With E-1 and E-3 offering underground options to cross through this part of the County, we ask that the Authority remove from consideration, as soon as possible, the E-2 alignment.

For the Acton area, the alignment presents concerns for our residents where the train comes out of the ground and crosses through this area on at-grade or elevated tracks. Our residents continue to seek mitigations to these areas to avoid damaging their quality of life. Please continue to develop these mitigations with community input to find a solution that works to the benefit of both the community and the project.

Water

Concerns over impacts to water have emerged consistently in our discussions with our stakeholders in all parts of the region, from both a personal and regional perspective. As you can imagine, given the large public policy discussion regarding the drought and looming water shortages statewide, this issue has gained a considerable amount of attention and traction.

Many of our residents in the Acton, Agua Dulce, and Southeast Antelope Valley communities depend upon wells and the local aquifers for their water, not hauled water or pipelines. Potential disruption of those wells, directly or indirectly, continues to be a major concern for these residents.

Regionally, the East Corridor proposals to bridge over or tunnel under the Tujunga Wash and surrounding area have raised worries about how these structures will interact with aquifers and other hydrological features in this ecologically sensitive part of the county.

It is vital that the Authority complete, in an expedited fashion, the hydrology studies that would provide important information to our residents and stakeholders as to the impacts the various alternatives will have on wells, rivers, washes, flood control areas, and aquifers.

Next Steps

In your May 21, 2015 letter addressing many of these concerns that have been raised by local communities, you wrote that it is “possible that at some point in the process the Authority will choose to narrow the scope of environmental studies and remove certain alignments from further consideration” based on the outcome of “technical analyses that indicate that certain routes are not potentially feasible, would not accomplish most basic program objectives, or involve no environmental advantages in any category as compared to other alignments”.

It is our hope that the Authority will front-load the technical studies necessary to determine if alignments that have greater impacts to our communities, such as E-2 and SCS, can be eliminated, as soon as possible, to alleviate the concerns raised by our residents and business owners about impacts to their properties, businesses, and quality of life. Your comment that you are “directing staff to prioritize and advance the studies on the Palmdale to Burbank route so that the critical issues...identified can be brought forward as quickly as possible” is in support of our request and provides a path forward for our communities to gain relief from undesirable alternatives.

We ask that the Authority clarifies the process of expediting these studies so that our communities have a clear understanding of when the studies will begin and end, and when the Authority will be able to make a decision based on information generated from these studies to eliminate undesirable alternatives currently under consideration.

Sincerely,



MICHAEL D. ANTONOVICH
Mayor
County of Los Angeles

SHEILA KUEHL
Supervisor
County of Los Angeles



FELIPE FUENTES
Councilmember
City of Los Angeles

MDA:mco

cc: Board of Directors, California High-Speed Rail Authority
Honorable Eric Garcetti, Mayor, City of Los Angeles
Mayor and Councilmembers, City of Santa Clarita
Mayor and Councilmembers, City of San Fernando
President, Acton Town Council
President, Agua Dulce Town Council