

**Central Valley Agricultural Working Group
October 28, 2011
Meeting Notes**

HST Section: Fresno to Bakersfield and Fresno to Merced

Meeting Date: October 28, 2011

Location: [REDACTED]

Purpose: To assist the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) in addressing the key issues raised by the agricultural community

Participants: John Diener, Chairman; John DeRuiter, Rabobank; Jim Dokken, Linder Equipment; Larry Schwankl, Kearney Ag Center, Parlier Station; Shannon Mueller, UCCE, Fresno; Tim Niswander, Kings County Agricultural Commissioner

Jeff Abercrombie, Central Valley Program Manager, CHSRA

Cheryl Lehn, Public Outreach, URS

Prepared by: Cheryl Lehn

Action Items

1. Jim Dokken will give specific equipment hauling widths required for certain pieces of machinery were they to be moved. These widths will include examples, economics, and recommendations.
 - a. Dokken will include an average width for equipment that needs to travel down a road.
 - b. Dokken will include whether there is an over or undercrossing, and what is an appropriate grade for a road to handle equipment movement.
 - c. Dokken will include the site distance needed.
 - d. Dokken will include machinery specifications.
2. The Ag Working Group will be sent, by email, the white paper on dust and insect impacts for their review and input.
3. Lehn will send an electronic version of the bees and pollination white paper to Mueller; Mueller will return a third draft for the AWG's consideration.
4. The goal is to get "white papers" out to the AWG and have them returned back before the AWG's next meeting.

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Decisions

1. Invite Ron Harbin of U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) to address the AWG and answer questions regarding dust plan rules.

Discussion of Issues

Abercrombie welcomed and thanked the group for their participation.

Abercrombie shared a letter with the AWG that he received from Senator Canella, the Chairman of the Agriculture Committee. Senator Canella asked for the AWG's member names, agendas and meeting notes.

The response to Senator Canella's request for information regarding the AWG included the history of the AWG. By a letter dated May 9, 2011, Abercrombie invited County Agricultural Commissioners in a six- county region from Kern to Merced counties to serve as part of an agricultural technical working group. In addition, Abercrombie asked the invitees to develop a list of technical experts and involve their county farm bureaus, or other stakeholders for these recommendations. After these county agricultural commissioners declined to participate, Abercrombie asked whether they would be willing to recommend other experts in the field to be part of the AWG, to help clarify questions regarding agriculture and potential impacts of the high-speed train.

In response to the AWG's request for recommendations to other professionals, Fresno County Agricultural Commissioner Carol Hafner responded on behalf of the six-county Ag commissioners group and sent Lehn suggestions. Four of the agricultural commissioners' recommendations were selected and currently serve on the AWG.

Project Update

Abercrombie told the AWG that an additional high-speed train alignment called the West Hanford alignment was going to be reviewed. This request for an additional alignment was made by the Army Corps of Engineers and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) who wanted to see an alternative to the East Hanford alignment.

Irrigation

Abercrombie re-introduced the irrigation schematics that were presented during past meetings. These drawings were offered by a group of Wasco/Shafter landowners.

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Abercrombie wanted Larry Schwankl, a new member of the AWG to review them as well as Jim Dokken. Dokken, is an AWG member and an equipment specialist who has not been able to participate in the past few meetings due to illness.

Irrigation and Water Systems Comments from the AWG

1. Open canals tend to be converted to underground pipeline
2. Open canals can be used for groundwater recharge
3. Open canals can be right of way issues because some of the canals have had rights for a long time (some since the late 1800's)
4. Advantages when open canals can be converted to a pipe or box culvert
5. Maintenance concern because of maintaining balance of ditch on both sides
6. Ditches followed contours when they were built, some require pumps vs. gravity flow
7. Most ditches run east to west, HST runs north to south
8. Who would maintain box culvert? How about losses due to more travel time?
9. Some pluses to having pipeline, such as safety.
10. Could be some access concern.
11. Some property owners may prefer relocating and constructing their own ditch.
12. State agency vs. local agency – better maintained by local.

Equipment Movement

1. Cultural practices are different for permanent crops vs. field crops.
2. Right of way concern and turn rows.
3. Some landowners use county roads to turn around, once HST is constructed, fence line may change.
4. Turn rows will vary between growers. Some plant to county or state road, some don't.
5. Depending on the type of crop, the turn road will vary. Once fence is established, the farmer will decide how close to get to it.
6. Outside the boundary of the HST right of way it will be up to the landowner to maintain.
7. If landowner loses some acreage, say two rows of trees due to fence placement, they will be compensated
8. Outside the fence line, there could be some exceptions from a safety and security stand point, like fuel tanks or chemical storage areas.
9. For private crossings, would the CHSRA make for the largest equipment possible?

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10. If farmer has a 20-foot disc, and now he has to buy a fold up disc, the CHSRA may have to help.
11. If a 2- foot, two-lane county road is disturbed, the CHSRA would replace in kind or better, due to safety.
12. There will be a change of operations if there is an overcrossing. Example: a corn silage truck will have to travel additional mileage and it will add cost to a dairy.
13. Example for hay: usually there are eight cuttings; more travel required if there is an overcrossing.
14. Tractors with dual tires would need a 12-foot maximum width road for travel and no duals would need a 9- to 10-foot wide road.
15. Clearance for HST is 27 feet.
16. Going under a bridge, a cotton picker height and combine width could be 30 to 35 feet.
17. Most equipment has to be hauled on a trailer. Most implements fold from 30 to 35 feet to 12 feet.
18. Equipment has to meet Caltrans specifications to be moved.

Dust and Insect Impacts

1. Landowners are complying with the rules established by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District for a Dust Management Plan. This includes vehicle miles traveled.
2. If an over or undercrossing is needed, a water truck may have to travel further. Is this a safety issue? Will landowners need compensation?
3. White paper on this issue will be sent to the AWG for comment and review.

General Discussion

1. How tall and what will the fence outside of the HST be constructed of? In response to this question Abercrombie said the HST fence will probably be 8 to 10 feet high. In an urban setting the fence may have decorative features, or could serve as a sound wall. A block wall could be 12 to 14 feet tall.
2. How will current roads be affected? How many roads will be eliminated? Over or under crossings will be every mile. In regards to how current roads will be affected and overcrossings, each road crossing will be determined on a case by case basis. For example in an area like Allensworth, it may be every 2 miles. May have to lengthen bridge or put in private crossings, in some cases.
3. In response to a question about where the white papers will end up, Abercrombie replied that they could end up with the CHSRA board. White papers

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may be circulated to County Agricultural Commissioners, farm bureaus, and other agriculture organizations. This is yet to be decided. White papers could be used to comment on the high-speed train's environmental document or be used to develop mitigation and design features.

4. Kings County Ag Commissioner Tim Niswander suggested that the dust white paper could include information about compliance with the SJV Air District rules.