

**Agricultural Working Group  
July 29, 2011  
Final Meeting Notes**

**HST Section:** Fresno to Bakersfield & Fresno to Merced

**Meeting Date:** July 29, 2011

**Location:** [REDACTED] Fresno, CA 93720

**Purpose:** To assist the CHSRA in addressing the key issues raised by the agricultural community

**Participants:** John Diener, Chairman; Shannon Mueller, UCCE, Fresno; Dr. David Zoldoske, CSU, Fresno; Jim Tischer, CSU, Fresno; John Karlik, UCCE, Kern; Jim Dokkehn, Linder Equipment, Tulare County; Gerald Higginbotham, Madera & Fresno Counties Dairy Advisor, UCCE

CHSRA: Jeff Abercrombie, Area Program Manager, Central Valley

URS: Cheryl Lehn, Public Outreach, Rebecca Nicholas, Public Outreach (by phone)

**Prepared by:** Cheryl Lehn

Action Items: None

Decisions: The group discussed when to meet again. Abercrombie will notify the group by email and offer the next date.

Discussion of Issues:

**Jeff Abercrombie, Area Program Manager, Central Valley, California High-Speed Rail Authority**

Jeff Abercrombie gave some history of the CHSRA and the key issues that continue to be raised by the agriculture community. This working group will be comprised of university, agency and agricultural business representatives. The criteria for the group includes a commitment to actively participate, a willingness to engage in a constructive manner, and identifiable interest in the subject matter and outcome.

The CHSRA is not looking for supporters or attractors. They are looking for research that can be used to define an issue; are the subjects in question an issue, or not an issue. Pollination,

## Agricultural Working Group July 29, 2011 Final Meeting Notes

wind, dust, pests, Ag spraying, how the HST may affect property values, efficiencies, etc. The group is totally voluntary.

The CHSRA's business plan will be released soon and has to be approved by the state legislature. Jeff commented that "we don't want to just keep building roads."

Reviewed the handout, which consisted of the history of the CHSRA, the Environmental Review Process: Statewide, Programmatic, Scoping Process, Alternative Analysis & Supplemental Reports, Construction, Funding Summary, Impact Analysis, Agriculture and the HST, Next Steps.

Reviewed the study of Hwy 99. Cities of Fowler, Kingsburg, and Selma were against the 99 corridor. The agriculture community was considered in trying to reduce urban sprawl by asking cities and counties to use TOD. Businesses, including the railroad, raised concerns about being sandwiched between Hwy 99 and the HST.

The HSR right of way will have to be fenced. From about midnight until 5:00 a.m. the trains will not be running, as they will be safety inspected at that time each day. Using a 1300 foot long track, approximately ¼ mile, the train will pass in about 4 seconds. Noise/sound information is available in the DEIR/S. Some of our partners have provided information regarding agriculture such as Spain, Japan and China.

The DEIR/S the Administrative Draft has been prepared with the Federal Partners (Federal Railroad Administration and the Army Corps of Engineers), it will be available to the public August 15, 2011. The DEIR/S will be certified by the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

If Endangered Species are found they will be mitigated.

The San Jose to Merced section as being the next section for a DEIR/S, estimated to be the spring of 2012. Bakersfield to Palmdale will be approximately another year.

The CHSRA does have the power of eminent domain. The CHSRA cannot buy right of way until the DEIR/S (document) is certified. The Authority hopes to finish their work in 2017. It will be hard to make that timing; however, the Authority hopes to be operating trains by 2020. A ¼ mile train would hold approximately 1,000 peoples, which equates to about 3 or 4 lanes of freeway traffic.

HSR hopes to have a work product that will come out of this group. Shared an example of being over the top of a dairy in Kings County. Will there be vibration to wells, bridges, what

## Agricultural Working Group July 29, 2011 Final Meeting Notes

about equipment movement, will there be a drop in milk production? All of these questions need to be answered.

Three top issues that keep coming up are wind, vibration and noise. Irrigation system re-design, pests, pesticides (tied to wind) agricultures concern about will the agricultural commissioner's change the rules on how close you can spray next to the HST, not how far, but will they have a "no drift rule."

Reviewed the concerns of some regarding the subject of political participation. HSR wants a work product that this group will point to using research and mitigation. Because the CHSRA is a state board, any of their committees will be public record. Within this group, someone may be asked to testify.

Jeff hopes that the group can point to some existing literature or research, or can call him and point to information. He was hoping not to exceed 20 to 30 hours over a 90-day period. It's hard to judge at this point.

Jeff discussed the outreach program when the DEIR/S is made public. It will include Workshops, Briefings, Highlights and Summaries sent to stakeholders, email blasts, brochures, programs at community centers and service clubs, etc.

### **John Diener, Chairman and Farmer**

Said the CHSRA needs clarity in the EIR/S process, which will be coming out shortly (August 12, 2011 proposed date) they need experts coming from agriculture, but not impacted personally. Diener said he is not just a proponent of the project, but a proponent for fairness. He wants to be certain that consideration is given to impacts. Is pollination a factor or not? Can equipment still turn at a certain radius?

John told the group that he wanted them to have the freedom to discuss and give information to the CHSRA. He explained that there are mandates in the right of way law that uses comparable sales and prices to determine land and improvement values.

John asked Jeff if there would be any pay for the group. This could be problematic, however not impossible. Could the CHSRA enter into a contract with the University for Research? If this group was to extend many months into the future that would be appropriate.

**Agricultural Working Group  
July 29, 2011  
Final Meeting Notes**

**Jim Tischer, California Water Institute, CSU, Fresno**

Very impressed with High-Speed Rail. Just returned from France, definitely a booster. Jim asked about the outreach program. Will the questions be recorded and answered? He said we should be prepared to answer questions and concerns. It will have to be shown in a leadership role.

**Gerald Higginbotham, UCCE, Madera, Dairy Specialist**

Stated he was here to provide unbiased information. Would like to recommend adding Carol Collar, the Kings County Dairy Advisor to the group.

Asked about the relationship between the CHSRA and URS Corporation. Jeff outlined the relationship between HSR, the PMT and the RCS.

**Dr. David Zoldoske, CSU, Fresno, California Water Institute**

Will need to look at the many miles of concrete pipe, will it leak because of HST? Knew that there had been a presentation at the San Joaquin Valley Partnership meeting.

**Dr. John Karlik, UCCE, Kern County**

Shared his background in plant and environmental sciences, biological and chemical sciences and engineering, has had experience with the California Air Resources Board Biogenic Emission Inventories. Has lots to share and has colleagues at Berkley that could also share.

Karlik said he visited Spain. They have more open land, without water, more hilly ground than we have here.

He asked if there were any Endangered Species concerns. He also asked about the Los Angeles and San Francisco pieces, as far as timing.

John asked if the CHSRA has the power of eminent domain. Yes.

John said the rules and understanding of "no drift" can be obtained by adding Mark Sabin, a GIS specialist from Kern County. He deals in Ag pesticide application, what crops and how they are affected, etc.

Karlik expressed a concern about the political side of this versus the experts which will be brought in by both sides.

**Agricultural Working Group  
July 29, 2011  
Final Meeting Notes**

**Shannon Mueller, UCCE, Fresno County**

Shared her background in numerous categories including alfalfa, seed, bees, etc. Shannon expressed concerns about the University's unwillingness to get involved in political committees, groups, etc.

**Jim Dokken, Linder Equipment**

Works in Kings, Kern, Fresno and Tulare Counties. Has no position on the HSR. Wish we would have had it 20 years ago, when it would have been affordable.

**Jim Tischer, CSU, Fresno, California Water Institute**

Asked who will certify the DEIR/S. HSR for CEQA and FRA for NEPA. Will need to think about the duration and magnitude of how irrigation systems may be affected.

**Cheryl Lehn, URS Corp, Outreach Team**

Cheryl stated that the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District representatives could not be present today, but wants to participate in the future.