

March 4, 2021

Member Agencies

City of Ceres

The Honorable Tom Richards
California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA)

City of Hughson

770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento CA, 95814

City of Modesto

RE: Support for CHSRA Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan

City of Newman

City of Oakdale

Dear Chair Richards,

City of Patterson

The Stanislaus Council of Governments (StanCOG) strongly supports California High-Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA's) Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan released February 9, 2021. The Business Plan includes pursuing Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Service with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera to provide electrified, high-speed rail (HSR) service to Californians at the earliest possible time. Independent peer review has confirmed the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield corridor, which includes HSR service and improvements in supporting Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) and the San Joaquins rail and bus services, obtains the highest forecast gain in ridership, and does so at the lowest increase in cost. The 171-mile electrified Interim Operating Segment extending north to Merced and south to Bakersfield, coordinated with improvements aligned with the State Rail Plan north of Merced to Sacramento and to the Bay Area and bus connections south of Bakersfield to Southern California, will create significant benefits including:

City of Riverbank

City of Turlock

City of Waterford

Stanislaus County

Policy Board Chair

Terry Withrow

- Leveraging the maximum degree of connectivity to other rail services through the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield HSR Interim Service while important project development work also continues in other parts of the state.
- Generating significant economic benefits, with over \$38 billion in total economic activity and over 200,000 job-years of employment through the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield HSR Interim Service.
- Reducing travel times for rail passengers between Sacramento and the Bay Area to Bakersfield by up to 90 to 100 minutes.
- Providing much faster, more frequent, and more reliable passenger rail service than is currently available in this corridor; more than doubling service frequency – more than doubling passenger rail ridership in the corridor.
- Improving access and connectivity to other California destinations through better connections with expanded ACE and San Joaquins rail services to the north at a multimodal hub in Merced and Thruway Bus Service in Bakersfield for travel to Southern California.

Policy Board Vice-Chair

Richard O'Brien

Executive Director

Rosa De León Park

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- Increasing corridor-wide ridership from 2.6 million passengers in 2017 to 8.8 million passengers in 2029 resulting in reduced state subsidies for passenger rail services.
- Improving, via electrified HSR, air quality in the Central Valley, and reducing GHG emissions by shifting from diesel to clean, electrically powered trains.
- Providing an overall infrastructure configuration, offering significant benefits to both passenger and freight movement.
- Allowing for early testing of electrified high-speed operations and passenger use and reducing ramp-up time for future extensions.
- Unlocking, through interim service, the socio-economic benefits associated with electrified high-speed rail passenger service prior to the completion of the Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line.

Rail passengers in California will greatly benefit from eliminating 90 to 100 minutes off train travel between Southern California and the Sacramento and Bay Area regions in the north. Direct connections in Merced to ACE and the San Joaquins will also translate into faster connections to the Capitol Corridor, Caltrain, Bay Area Rapid Transit, Sacramento Regional Transit, Valley Link and Valley Transportation Authority systems, which will also benefit by the increase in ridership. The success of this early interim HSR service is essential towards implementing the ultimate HSR rail system between the Bay Area, Sacramento, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.

StanCOG also strongly supports the Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan recommendation that \$4.1 billion in remaining Prop 1A HSR bond funds be directed to complete delivery of the 119-mile electrified Central Valley Segment, and the remaining \$100 million in HSR bond funds be used for early design and completing environmental review on San Francisco to Los Angeles Phase 1 segments. This funding is required to implement Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield HSR Interim Service and to extend HSR to San Francisco and Southern California in the future.

StanCOG is very pleased to submit this letter of support for the staff recommendations of the CHSRA Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan.

Sincerely,



Rosa De Leon Park
Executive Director

cc: Brian Kelly, California High-Speed Rail Authority, CEO
Brian Annis, California High-Speed Rail Authority, CFO
Chad Edison, California State Transportation Agency, Chief Deputy Secretary
for Rail and Transit
Assembly Transportation Committee
Senate Transportation Committee