



March 8, 2021

The Honorable Assembly Member Laura Friedman, Chair
Assembly Transportation Committee
Attn: Farra Bracht
Via Email: farra.bracht@asm.ca.gov

The Honorable Assembly Member Richard Bloom, Chair
Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 3 on Climate Crisis, Resources, Energy, and Transportation
Attn: Genevieve Morelos
Via Email: genevieve.morelos@asm.ca.gov; BudgetSub3@asm.ca.gov

Subject: High Speed Rail Authority Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan

Dear Chairs Friedman and Bloom:

On behalf of the Transportation Agency for Monterey County (TAMC), I am writing to provide comments on the High Speed Rail Authority Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan. TAMC supports the high-speed trains stopping in downtown Gilroy, which would facilitate connections with regional and local transit services and increase ridership on the connecting passenger rail system in Gilroy, including the planned extension of Caltrain service from Gilroy to Salinas.

The Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan sets forth a plan to get electrified high-speed trains running as soon as possible while continuing to advance the entire high-speed rail system from San Francisco to Los Angeles/Anaheim. While this plan lays out the path toward getting trains running between Merced and Bakersfield, for the first time, it spells out and proposes to fund the next steps in advancing the work in Northern and Southern California beyond environmental clearance to the next stages of design and development so that California can be positioned for funding opportunities to extend the system to the Bay Area and to Los Angeles. This will build on early investments in high-speed rail infrastructure that the Authority has already made in the bookend projects, including over \$700 million for the Caltrain Electrification project.

The three-county Monterey Bay Area had a population of 776,000 in 2018 and is projected to reach over a million residents by the year 2030. The region's growing population needs an alternative means of getting to jobs, health care, entertainment and shopping around the region and across the state. Increased access to the rail network and connectivity to the high-speed rail system in Gilroy will help the region be more sustainable economically, environmentally and socially.

TAMC is the lead agency planning for an extension of Caltrain passenger rail service to Salinas in Monterey County from the Bay Area via the Gilroy station. TAMC's hope is that a downtown Gilroy High-Speed Rail station will complement and connect with the existing and future extended Caltrain system, as well as bus connections to the Central Coast.

Thank you for your consideration of our comments. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this exciting project.

Sincerely,



Debra L. Hale
Executive Director

CC: Morgan Galli, High Speed Rail Authority