

WORKING PARTNERSHIPS USA

March 9, 2021

Assembly Transportation Committee
1020 N Street, Room 112
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Revised 2020 Business Plan Hearing- Joint Meeting of the Assembly Transportation Committee and Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3

Dear Chair Friedman and Chair Bloom,

Working Partnerships USA, a Silicon Valley-based community organization bringing together the power of grassroots organizing and public policy innovation to drive the movement for a just economy, is proud to support High-Speed Rail Authority's Draft 2020 Business Plan and Funding Plan to further advance efforts in moving this monumental project forward, creating a statewide transit option and providing jobs throughout this process. Additionally, we would also like to support High Speed Rail Authority's (HSRA) request for the legislature to appropriate remaining funds from Proposition 1A, which would come out to \$4 billion in order to complete the electrification of the corridor in the Central Valley as well as completing construction in the same region.

This project would connect our state and provide job opportunities in various regions, the revised draft 2020 Business Plan lays the groundwork for a long term plan to get high speed trains electrified and up and running as soon as possible with the end goal of building up the entire high speed rail system from San Francisco to Southern California. Through extensive review in the Central Valley region, the findings show the true value of high speed rail, which would have the ability to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and pollution in some areas that have some of the worst air quality in the country, as well as creating significant ridership opportunities in a region that has not seen this transit option before. The benefit that this project would provide for communities in terms of transit and job creation should not be understated. That being said, there is still a lot of work to do and resources needed to complete this project. In terms of funding, A critical next step will be for the legislature to approve the allocation of the remaining \$4.2 billion in Proposition 1A funds to complete construction on the first operating segment in the Central Valley.

Through a global pandemic, the High Speed Rail Authority has made significant strides to stay on track amidst impediments beyond anyone's control. Through additional hurdles as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, HSRA continued to push through with construction and had as many as 1,200 construction workers on the job by the end of 2020. These jobs are crucial during a time

where many forms of employment have been impacted or even eliminated. Without the appropriation of the remaining Prop 1A funds, jobs could be lost which would be a significant blow to what has been a growing labor workforce.

This program is moving in the right direction, but additional resources are required in order to continue to advance efforts and achieve the overall goal of a statewide high speed rail system. We are seeing the reality of that goal come together in the Central Valley, and with a new administration in the white house, we see a federal partner that is aligned with our vision and committing to prioritizing High Speed Rail at a national level.

We would like to restate our ardent support for High Speed Rail and urge state leaders to approve additional funding from Prop 1A so construction and electrification can be completed in the Central Valley. Amidst a pandemic and other unexpected hurdles, this program is moving in the right direction, continued support will allow this project to move toward the overall vision of a statewide system that would be a monumental benefit for communities throughout California.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jeff Buchanan", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jeffrey Buchanan, Director of Public Policy
Working Partnerships USA