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California State Senate

SENATOR
DR. RICHARD PAN
SIXTH SENATE DISTRICT



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#3 ON HEALTH
& HUMAN SERVICES

March 8, 2021

Mr. Tom Richards, Chair
California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA)
boardmembers@hsr.ca.gov
770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: Support for CHSRA Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan

Dear Mr. Richards,

As a representative of Sacramento, West Sacramento, Elk Grove, and unincorporated areas of Sacramento County, I am writing to express my strong support for CHSRA's Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan (released February 9, 2021). I agree that the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Service, with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera, should 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 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 (which extends north to Merced and south to Bakersfield), coordinated with improvements aligned with the State Rail Plan north of Merced to Sacramento, to the Bay Area and bus connections south of Bakersfield to Southern California, will create significant benefits including:

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

- Corridor-wide ridership will increase from 2.6 million passengers in 2017 to 8.8 million passengers in 2029, resulting in reduced state subsidies for passenger rail services.
- Electrified HSR improves air quality in the Central Valley and reduces GHG emissions by shifting from diesel to clean, electrically powered trains.
- Provides an overall infrastructure configuration offering significant benefits to both passenger and freight movement.
- Allows for early testing of electrified high-speed operations and passenger use while reducing ramp-up time for future extensions.
- Unlocks the socio-economic benefits associated with electrified high-speed rail passenger service prior to the completion of the Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line.

Residents of the Greater Sacramento area will benefit from the 90 to 100 minutes they save on train trips to Southern California. Furthermore, the reduction of emissions will have a direct impact on the health of my constituents. Direct connections in Merced to ACE and the San Joaquins will also translate into faster connections to the Capitols, Caltrain, BART, SacRT, Valley Link and VTA systems, which will also experience higher 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.

I also support 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 the completion of environmental reviews on the San Francisco to Los Angeles Phase 1 segments. As you know, 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.

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the staff recommendations of the CHSRA Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan. If you should have any questions, please feel free to reach out to my office at 916-651-4006 or email me at Senator.Pan@senate.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Richard Pan, MD, MPH
State Senator, California's 6th District

cc: Brian Kelly, CEO; Brian Annis, CFO; Chad Edison, CalSTA; Assembly Transportation Committee; Senate Transportation Committee