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**PHIL SERNA
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LISA NAVA
Chief of Staff

February 14, 2020

Mr. Lenny Mendonca, Chair
California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: Support for Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Operating Segment

Dear Honorable Chair Mendonca,

I am writing to express strong support for the Governor's Plan and CHSRA's policy recommendations (2019 Project Update Report released May 1) to pursue a Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera. The Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment will leverage the maximum degree of connectivity to other improving rail services, while important project development work also continues elsewhere in the state.

The 171-mile line Interim Operating Segment extending north to Merced and south to Bakersfield creates significant benefits including:

- Much faster, more frequent and more reliable passenger rail service;
- Reduced travel times for rail passengers between Sacramento and the Bay Area to Bakersfield by up to 90 to 100 minutes;
- Enhanced connectivity and accessibility for other passenger rail service;
- Higher ridership and revenue potential for Central Valley options;
- Improved air quality from the shift to clean fuel and electrically powered trains; and
- Early testing of high-speed operations and passenger use and reduced ramp-up time for future extensions.

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 service is essential towards implementing the ultimate high-speed rail system between the Bay Area, Sacramento, San Joaquin Valley and Southern California.

February 14, 2020

I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Operating Segment. Should you have questions or require further information, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Serna", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Phil Serna
Supervisor, First District
Member, California Air Resources Board

Cc: Brian Kelly, CEO
Brian Annis, CFO
Chad Edison, CalSTA