

JERRY McNERNEY

9TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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February 17, 2020

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

RE: Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Operating Segment

Dear Chair Mendonca:

I write to you regarding the Governor's Plan and California High-Speed Rail Authority's policy recommendations to pursue a Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment, with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera, in order to provide high-speed rail services to Californians as expeditiously as possible.

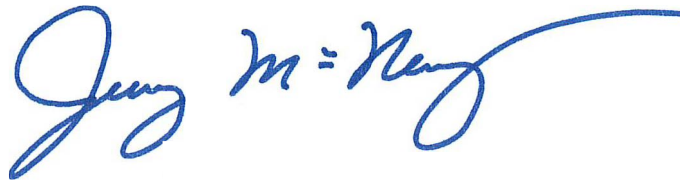
The Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment will leverage the maximum degree of connectivity to other rail services. The 171-mile line interim operating segment extending north to Merced and south to Bakersfield, coordinated with improvements aligned with the California State Rail Plan north of Merced to Sacramento and to the Bay Area, as well as bus connections south of Bakersfield to Southern California, will create significant benefits including:

- Much faster, more frequent and more reliable passenger rail service than is currently available in this corridor;
- 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 to other passenger rail services;
- The highest ridership and revenue potential of any Central Valley option;
- Improved air quality in the Central Valley as a result of shifting from diesel to clean, electrically powered trains;
- An overall infrastructure configuration offering significant benefits to both passenger and freight movement; and
- Allowing for early testing of high-speed operations and passenger use and reduces ramp-up time for future extensions.

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. Direct connections in Merced to the Altamont Corridor Express and the San Joaquins Intercity Passenger Rail Service will translate into faster connections to the Capitols, Caltrain, Bay Area Rapid Transit, Sacramento Regional Transit District, Valley Link and Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority systems, which will also experience higher ridership. Rail passengers in California will greatly benefit from slashing 90 to 100 minutes off train travel between Southern California and the Sacramento and Bay Area regions in the north.

I believe the Governor's Plan and California High-Speed Rail Authority's policy recommendations provide the best step forward for the high-speed rail system, my constituents, and all Californians. I respectfully ask that you give full and fair consideration to their adoption.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jerry McNerney". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress