



MAYOR LEE BRAND

**To: Eric Thronson, Chief Consultant, California State
Assembly Committee on Transportation**

**Re: Written testimony from Fresno Mayor Lee Brand for
the May 27, 2020 Assembly Transportation Committee
oversight hearing on the California High Speed Rail
Authority's Draft 2020 Business Plan**

- Mayor Lee Brand strongly supports the California High-Speed Rail Authority's 2020 Business Plan as proposed.
- Furthermore, we strongly support generating and keeping jobs in disadvantaged areas of the state, such as Fresno and the Central San Joaquin Valley.
- It is important to remember the voters approved Proposition 1A in 2008 with the intent of connecting 8 of 10 population centers in the state.
- Additionally, I wish to reiterate my support for Governor Newsom's plan and the California High Speed Rail Authority's May 2019 policy recommendation to pursue a Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim high-speed rail operating segment.
- This segment will provide high-speed rail service at the earliest possible time while at the same time leveraging the maximum degree of connectivity

to other key rail services. During this time important project development work would also continue in other parts of the state.

- The initial 171-mile high-speed rail segment – coordinated with the State Rail Plan north of Merced to Sacramento and the Bay Area, and bus connections south of Bakersfield to Southern California – would create significant benefits. Among
 - faster, more frequent and more reliable passenger rail service than is currently available;
 - reduced travel times for rail passengers between Sacramento and the Bay Area to Bakersfield by up to 100 minutes
 - improved air quality in the Central Valley
 - Early testing of high-speed operations and passenger use as well as reducing ramp-up time for future extensions.

- The interim high-speed rail line will provide a direct connection 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

- 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.

- Fresno is a City struggling to diversify its economy and catch up with the coastal areas where the standard of living and quality of life are higher by every measure. This money – and the high-speed rail line it will fund – is critical to Fresno’s future success as it looks to grow beyond its agricultural roots. It will in the short term make travel faster to northern and southern California, and in the long term, hopefully a high speed rail line from LA to San Francisco – which would put Fresno less than an hour away by train from the Silicon Valley. This is the real change Fresno needs.