



March 26, 2020

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

RE: Support for 2020 Draft CHSRA Business Plan Recommendations

Dear Honorable Chair Mendonca:

The San Joaquin Regional Transit District (RTD) strongly supports the Governor's Plan and CHSRA's staff recommendations (2020 Draft Business Plan released February 12) to pursue a Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield interim operating segment with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera to provide high-speed rail service to Californians at the earliest possible time. The 171-mile line Interim Operating Segment extending north to Merced and south to Bakersfield coordinated with improvements aligned with the State Rail Plan north of Merced to Sacramento and to the Bay Area and bus connections south of Bakersfield to Southern California create significant benefits including:

- 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 in other parts of the state;
- Merced to Bakersfield interim service will generate significant economic benefits, with the \$20.4 billion capital program projected to generate about \$38 billion in total economic activity and over 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 – more than doubling passenger rail ridership in the corridor;
- Improve access and connectivity to other California destinations through better connections with expanded ACE and San Joaquins rail services to the north at a multimodal hub in Merced and Thruway Bus Service at Bakersfield for travel to Southern California;

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER: Gloria Salazar

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SAN JOAQUIN REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

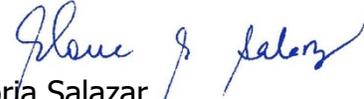
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- Corridor-wide ridership increasing from 2.6 million passengers in 2017 to 8.8 million passengers in 2029 that results in reduced state subsidies for passenger rail services;
- Improves air quality in the Central Valley and reduces GHG emissions by 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 high-speed operations and passenger use and reduces ramp-up time for future extensions; and
- Interim service unlocks the socio-economic benefits associated with high-speed rail passenger service prior to the completion of the Silicon Valley to Central Valley Line.

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. 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.

RTD is very pleased to submit this letter of support for the staff recommendations of the 2020 CHSRA Draft Business Plan.

Sincerely,



Gloria Salazar
Chief Executive Officer

cc Brian Kelly, CEO; Brian Annis, CFO; Chad Edison, CalSTA