



**Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce**  
La Cámara de Comercio Hispana del Condado de Merced  
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March 29, 2022

Mr. Tom Richards, Chairperson  
California High Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors  
770 L Street, Suite 620  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
(916) 324-1541  
[boardmembers@hrs.ca.gov](mailto:boardmembers@hrs.ca.gov)

**RE: Support for the California High-Speed Rail Authority Revised Draft 2022 Business Plan**

Dear Esteemed Members of the Board,

On behalf of Merced County Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express our support for Governor Newsom's vision and plan for high-speed rail in California, particularly the essential infrastructure investments in transportation in the heart of California—the Central Valley. High-speed rail will provide a commitment to clean, low- and no-carbon transportation strategies that help reduce pollution in the Central Valley, home to some of the nation's worst air quality and highest asthma rates.

Our commitment includes continued support for the draft 2022 Business Plan for the high-speed rail project, which provides for pursuing Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Service with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera. In addition, our support includes electrified, high-speed rail service to Californians at the earliest possible time.

Merced, Fresno, and Bakersfield are home to nearly one million Californians, and the respective counties—Merced, Fresno, Kern—have a population above two million people. As a result, the cities in the Central Valley are among California's fastest-growing communities, ripe with the opportunity to carry California into a sustainable future.

Governor Newsom's commitment and vision for high-speed rail are memorialized in the Revised Draft 2022 Business Plan, including a Central Valley segment that cuts travel time in half between cities in the Valley compared to today's rail service or traveling by car. In addition, the plan frames a high-speed rail line that provides connections in Merced to the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) train service and the San Joaquin service to Oakland and Sacramento in the north and the Central Valley and Los Angeles in the south.

While the project is transformative for the Central Valley, it maintains critical targeted investments adopted by the High-Speed Rail Authority in the Bay Area and Los Angeles.

This project is key to opening Valley-to-Valley access to allow companies to expand to the Central Valley and offer affordable housing prospects that align with the Governor's overall goals to ensure statewide coordinated investments.

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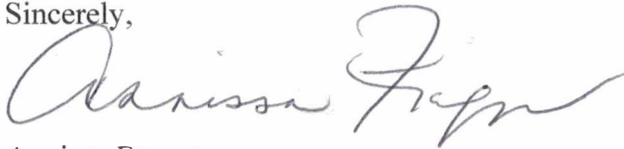
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High-speed rail also connects Merced and the Central Valley to the Megaregion efforts from the Bay Area—providing a regional perspective on addressing housing, workforce, and educational issues, including leveraging State investments in dynamic institutions such as UC Merced.

Merced to Bakersfield HSR Interim Service will generate significant economic benefits, with over \$38 billion in total economic activity and over 200,000 job-years of employment. Corridor-wide ridership increases from 2.6 million passengers in 2017 to 8.8 million passengers in 2029, which results in reduced State subsidies for passenger rail services. Electrified high-speed rail improves air quality in the Central Valley and reduces GHG emissions by shifting from diesel to clean, electrically powered trains.

MCHCC has been and remains supportive of high-speed rail and looks forward to a continued partnership in doing its part to provide solutions to California's long-term challenges.

Sincerely,



Annissa Fragoso  
President of MCHCC & Board of Director