

Central Valley 119-Mile Wildlife Crossing Monitoring Program

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is applying for a grant from Federal Highway Administration's **FY 2022/2023 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP)**. This program seeks projects to reduce the number of wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVC) and improve habitat connectivity for terrestrial and aquatic species.



The outcomes are to improve the overall safety of the traveling public, mitigate any significant safety risks to reduce public burden and economic drain, such as loss of income, medical costs, costs of replacing property damage, and decline in productivity and quality of life. The Authority is requesting WCPP funding to implement a non-construction Wildlife Crossing Monitoring Program (Project) to research and monitor constructed crossings implemented along the 119-miles of high-speed rail infrastructure through the Central Valley. The WCPP grant would support a 5-year effort to monitor the San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), as well as other wildlife that may be attracted to the crossings that will be examined.

This grant would allow the Authority, working with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, to implement a 119-mile longitudinal, five-year monitoring study to assess more than 300 dedicated wildlife crossing structures. The monitoring program will examine the crossings effectiveness in facilitating wildlife movement.

The outcome of the study will help determine placement and design of crossings on future transportation projects. Specifically, this will include the spacing of crossings, the benefits of grouped crossings, the appropriate placement of crossings within the landscape to facilitate movement and inform the size and configuration of structures used in the future.

The Project is designed to provide:

- Research and monitoring of the effectiveness of WVC mitigation, specifically wildlife under-crossings;
- Review of the San Joaquin kit fox migration corridors to identify the barriers of habitat migration; and
- Analysis of alternative design specifications and their effectiveness to be incorporated into future transportation projects to reduce WVCs.

This grant application, for approximately \$2.5 million, builds on the federal government's prior investments of approximately \$3.5 billion for the California High-Speed Rail Project, including three recent grant awards from the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Program. This federal-state partnership has provided vital financial support resulting in significant job opportunities in many disadvantaged Central Valley communities.

This application is a part of a holistic federal-state partnership strategy to leverage over \$14.2 billion in State of California funding provided to date, including \$9 billion of Proposition 1A bonds approved by California voters and nearly \$6 billion in dedicated revenues (as of May 2023) from the innovative Cap-and-Trade greenhouse gas reduction auction program. California is the only state in the country to have committed this level of funding to advance electrified, 220 mph high-speed rail.

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