



California High-Speed Rail

BRIEFING: March 4, 2026 Board Meeting Agenda Item #3

TO: Board Chair Richards and Board Members

FROM: Emily Morrison, Chief of Contracting

DATE: March 4, 2026

RE: Consider approving the issuance of the Invitation for Bids (IFB) for the Procurement of Cable Troughs

Summary

Staff recommends that the Board approve the inclusion of one additional rail material to the list of materials that staff are authorized to acquire through the materials solicitation procurement process—cable troughs—as well as the associated issuance of one additional rail materials solicitation to invite bids from suppliers to provide cable troughs. Cable troughs are a commoditized material necessary for the construction of high-speed rail track and systems. If approved, the Authority intends to purchase the cable troughs directly from the lowest bidder. This solicitation for cable troughs is absorbable within the previously approved budget of \$507,100,000 for materials solicitations (see #HSRA25-06).

Like the previous approved materials contracts for OCS Poles, Long Welded Rail, Concrete Ties, Ballast, and OCS Components, this new Cable Troughs contract will be issued through multiple Notices to Proceed (NTPs) as described below. No work may begin until the Authority has issued both NTP and a purchase order directing the Contractor to manufacture and deliver materials.

NTP 1: supply of Cable Troughs for use in the 119-mile First Construction Section (Madera to Poplar Avenue) (anticipated October 2026)

NTP 2: supply of Cable Troughs for use in the northern extension (Madera to Merced) (TBD)

NTP 3: supply of Cable Troughs for use in the southern extension (Poplar Avenue to Bakersfield) (TBD)

NTP 4: supply of Cable Troughs for use in construction on the High-Desert Corridor. (TBD)

NTP 2, NTP 3, NTP 4 will be options to be exercised at the Authority's sole discretion.

Staff seeks approval today to issue the solicitation, award the contract, and issue NTP 1. Staff will return to the Board for approval to issue NTP 2 and/or NTP 3 for the Cable Troughs contract.

NTP 1 for this material purchase is anticipated to be 100% state funded. Future NTPs may be funded by both federal grant (e.g., the Federal State Partnership [FSP]) and state matching funds.

If approved, the IFB will be released in March 2026. Contract Award, Notice to Proceed 1, and the first set of orders are anticipated to occur in Quarter 2, 2026.

Background

Cable Troughs are a necessary part of the track and systems. Track and systems are critical elements of the high-speed rail system.

The Board approved the award of a Design Services for Track and Overhead Contact Systems (OCS) contract to the SYSTRA|TYP SA Joint Venture in its June 26, 2024, meeting. The Board also approved advertisement of the track and systems contract (TSCC) at its meeting on November 20, 2025, and that the TSCC solicitation is currently underway.

To further this work, Staff has determined that it is in the Authority's best interest to purchase certain commoditized materials directly from suppliers before the future track and systems construction contract is awarded. The Board has already approved this approach for the other materials (OCS Poles, Rail, Concrete Ties, Ballast, OCS Components) and, if it approves the present request for Cable Troughs, these materials will be purchased by the Authority and provided to the track and systems construction contractor to install. Directly purchasing certain long lead commoditized materials to accelerate logistics and reduce costs is consistent with the 2025 Project Update Report and was a topic of discussion in the CEO report at the May 1, 2025, and July 11, 2025, Board meetings.

Prior Board Action

On August 28, 2025, the Board approved issuance of six Invitation for Bids (IFB) for commoditized materials, which included OCS Poles, Long Welded Rail, Concrete Ties, Ballast, and OCS Components with a cumulative not to exceed budget of \$507,100,000. The Board also gave approval for the CEO to execute awards to the lowest bidder for all IFBs.

This item is consistent with the rationale behind approval of the prior materials. This item is also consistent with the scope, budget, and schedule approval of the overall Program Baseline and Budget approved by the Board on August 28, 2025.

Discussion

Cable Troughs are core components of the high-speed track and OCS systems to be constructed by the future track and systems construction contractor. Staff has conducted an analysis of the high-speed rail supply chain and determined that purchasing these commoditized materials directly rather than having the future construction contractor purchase them will likely result in cost and schedule savings to the Authority. By placing these materials contracts in advance of procuring a contract for the future track and systems construction contractor, the Authority will be in a position to avoid delays caused by long lead times on these critical path items. Ordering materials before the future track and systems construction contract has been awarded will mean the materials are on hand as soon as the track and systems construction contractor is ready to use them.

Materials will initially be delivered to the Authority's southern railhead in the City of Wasco. The railhead facility will provide storage and staging for the materials but will not be a site for stockpiling mass quantities. The intention instead is to place purchase orders based on lead times for delivery to properly sequence the work and have enough materials on hand at any given time for approximately 2-4 weeks of work.

All materials must be newly manufactured goods and conform to the technical specifications as provided by the Authority. All materials supplied must be Buy America and Build America compliant in accordance with 49 U.S.C. § 22905 and 2 C.F.R. part 184.

If approved, the Authority would release an Invitation for Bids to purchase Cable Troughs. Staff estimates the lead time for Cable Trough, if a specific design is provided to industry, to be approximately 6 months. The first order is anticipated to be placed in the Summer of 2026 so that the Authority will have materials on hand to start laying rail by the end of 2026.

Procurement Approach:

Contracts would be awarded on the basis of the lowest responsive bid from a responsible bidder. Following contract execution, orders for materials will be offered to contractors in rank order. Details on the selection process, including procedures for awarding contracts to multiple bidders, if applicable, will be included in the solicitation documents for each procurement.

Draft IFBs can be found on the California State Contract Register. Specific links provided here.

<https://caleprocure.ca.gov/event/2665/HSR25-117>

Small Business Program Goals:

There are no Small Business (SB), Disabled Veteran Business Enterprise (DVBE), or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) goals in these procurements as market research has indicated that there are no available SB, DVBE, or DBE firms able to provide these materials. Any deficit this creates in achieving the Authority's overall SB Program goals will be made up by increasing small business utilization on other procurements, such as the MATOC.

While the Authority aims to maximize small business participation in line with the Board-approved Small Business Program, there are situations where specific contracts or solicitations are not as suitable for small business participation. Market research indicates that there are very few small businesses, disabled veteran business enterprises, or disadvantaged business enterprises able to provide the rail commodities. Staff will take all practical actions necessary to meet the Authority's small business participation goals but has determined that including the small business requirements in these contracts is not practical and could deter competition. Staff therefore seeks Board approval to exempt this solicitation and contract from the small business goals.

Legal Approval

Legal has reviewed and signed off on this memorandum.

Procurement documents will be provided for legal review prior to release.

Budget and Fiscal Impact

No additional budget is requested for this Board Item and the current commodities budget previously approved is anticipated to absorb the initial order of Cable Troughs. Consistent with the approved Program Baseline Budget this approach secures necessary commodities to continue advancement of track and systems infrastructure to meet prior federal grant requirements.

The Authority's Financial Office tracks and monitors the budget for commodities against the approved budget and if the budget becomes insufficient to advance the work, the Authority will bring forward a request to augment the budget at that time.

Recommendations

Staff is recommending Board approval to: (1) issue Invitations for Bids to receive competitive bids for Cable Troughs as described above, (2) authorize the CEO, or designee of the CEO, to execute and award a contract to the lowest responsible bidders and (3) authorize staff to develop and finalize the procurement and

contractual documents prior to beginning the bid process and make any necessary non-substantive modifications thereto during the procurement process.

Attachments

- Cable Trough Procurement PowerPoint Presentation
- Draft Board Resolution #HSRA 26-03 Approval to Release Invitations for Bids and Award Contracts for the Purchase of Materials