

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

NOTICE UNDER NEPA ONLY

DRAFT

Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye

Pursuant to:
National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332 et seq.), 40 C.F.R. Part 1500, 49 U.S.C. 303, and 64
Fed. Reg. 28545; and 23 U.S.C. 327

Prepared by the
State of California
California High-Speed Rail Authority (under NEPA Assignment from FRA)

With Cooperating Agencies:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Surface Transportation Board

Original Signed
August 12, 2019

Original Signed By:
Brian P. Kelly

Date of Approval

Brian P. Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
California High-Speed Rail Authority

The Authority, as state lead agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), released this document for public and agency review and comment from May 3, 2019 to June 20, 2019, under CEQA only. This document is now being released for public and agency review pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) only, with the Authority acting as the federal lead agency pursuant to NEPA assignment (23 U.S.C. 327).

The following individual may be contacted for additional information concerning this document:

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The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable Federal environmental laws for this project are being or have been carried out by the State of California pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding, which was made effective July 23, 2019, after being executed by the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of California. The final application and MOU will be made available upon request. In signing this document, the Authority carries out its responsibilities under NEPA, as assigned under the MOU, for the Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.

Abstract: This *California High-Speed Rail, Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS* (Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS) considers, describes, and summarizes the environmental impacts of a portion of the Merced to Fresno Section project—the Central Valley Wye, an approximately 51- to 55-mile portion of the larger 800-mile California High-Speed Rail system planned

throughout California. The high-speed rail system will connect the major population centers of Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange County, and San Diego. As part of the Merced to Fresno Section of the statewide high-speed rail system, the Central Valley Wye would create the east-west high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east. This Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is a supplement to the Merced to Fresno Section: Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). The Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS identified the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative, for the north/south alignment of the high-speed rail, but did not select a preferred alternative for the Central Valley Wye. The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) Board of Directors certified the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS under the CEQA on May 3, 2012, and filed a Notice of Determination on May 4, 2012. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a record of decision (ROD) under NEPA on September 18, 2012, and the Surface Transportation Board issued a ROD on June 13, 2013. Although the Authority Board of Directors and FRA approved portions of the Hybrid Alternative outside the wye for the north/south alignment of the high-speed rail and the Downtown Merced and Downtown Fresno Mariposa Street station locations, these approvals deferred a decision on the area known as the “wye connection”. The “wye connection” is the east-west high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east, to allow for additional environmental analysis. This document provides that analysis.

The need for the HSR system exists statewide, with specific attributes of regional areas contributing to this need. The Merced to Fresno Section is an essential component of the statewide HSR system and directly relates to the population growth and increased intercity travel demand over the next 20 years and beyond and the increased travel delays and congestion that would result on California’s highways and at its airports. Four alternatives are considered in this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS: the State Route (SR) 152 (North) to Road 13 Wye; the SR 152 (North) to Road 19 Wye; the Avenue 21 to Road 13 Wye; and the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye. The Authority identified the Preferred Alternative in this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS as the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative. The Authority will incorporate into the design of each Central Valley Wye alternative impact avoidance and minimization features (IAMF): standard practices, actions, and design features. Potential environmental impacts of the alternatives include air pollutant emissions; increases in noise and vibration; displacement of commercial, residential, and agricultural properties; community and neighborhood disruption; impacts on historic and archaeological sites; visual impacts; impacts on sensitive biological resources and wetlands; and cumulative impacts. Mitigation measures have been developed to avoid or reduce significant impacts identified in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.

This Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is being made available to the public in accordance with the NEPA.

Visit the California High-Speed Rail Authority [website](#), where you can:

- View and download the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.
- Request a compact disc (CD) of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.
- Find a location near you to review a copy of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.

Printed and electronic copies (CDs) have been placed in the main public libraries and/or other locations in the following cities and communities: Madera, Merced, Chowchilla, and Fresno. Printed and electronic copies of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, along with electronic copies of the associated technical reports, and the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS, also are available for review during business hours at the California High-Speed Rail Authority’s office in Sacramento and Fresno.