



City of
SANTA CLARITA

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January 11, 2016

Mr. Dan Richard, Chairman
Board of Directors
California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Richard:

On November 12, 2015, the members of the North Los Angeles County Communities Protection Coalition (Coalition) met in Santa Clarita. During the discussion on the process of receiving timely information from the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) regarding the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section of the California High-Speed Rail Project (Project) it was obvious that there was profound frustration. The primary concern of the Coalition is the lack of communication and follow-through CHSRA has demonstrated since the June 9, 2015, Board of Directors (Board) Meeting. The CHSRA has failed to maintain regular dialogue with communities located within the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section regarding the initial steps and environmental studies along the SR 14 Corridor and East Corridor alignments.

As you may recall from the June 9, 2015, CHSRA Board Meeting in Downtown Los Angeles, during the discussion on Item 3 related to the Supplemental Alternatives Analysis for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section, the Board directed staff to complete certain studies relating to potentially infeasible and devastating impacts on some of the proposed routes. The Board expressed a strong desire for updates related to preliminary information yielded from initial studies be brought back to the Board within an estimated six-month time period.

During the discussion, the Board acknowledged concerns that were expressed by the many residents located along the proposed alignments within the Project Section. These concerns have been expressed by thousands of stakeholders via written and verbal comments made at various scoping, open house, working group and community meetings related to the Project. Based on the Board's discussion as to the feasibility of providing preliminary findings from the initial round of studies which were expected to yield information by the end of 2015, the Board approved a motion to provide these preliminary findings to the public. This would allow for any alignments found to be infeasible to be removed from further consideration earlier in the process, rather than requiring these communities to wait a minimum of two years until the final Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) is released.



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While the Coalition is appreciative of the Board's desire to provide information, as expressed at the June 9, 2015, Board Meeting and recently demonstrated through the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Update issued on December 2, 2015, we feel that opportunities have been missed over the last six months to issue regular updates on the status of the project. For example, not long after the June 9, 2015, Board Meeting, it quickly became clear that the feasibility of promptly completing the initial studies proposed by CHSRA staff would become greatly inhibited and unable to meet the anticipated deadline. Specifically, the delay in securing permits from the United States Forest Service to conduct geotechnical investigations is the most recent example of the CHSRA's inability to meet its optimistic deadlines adding several months to the process. We feel that a significant event such as this warrants regular communication with the affected communities and local elected officials to ensure that affected communities are updated with accurate information.

The studies of greatest interest to communities represented by the Coalition include those related to the feasibility of tunneling under the Angeles National Forest and other areas, potential impacts to water quality, as well as studies regarding seismic hazards. While the motion adopted by the Board at the June 9, 2015, Board Meeting to present preliminary findings from initial studies did not call for a specific date of completion, the discussion between the Board and CHSRA staff clearly created an expectation with the public that this information would be made available by the end of 2015.

As the CHSRA continues to move forward with the EIS/EIR process, the Coalition requests that the Board take immediate action to eliminate any surface alignments within the Project Section that are found to be infeasible based on preliminary findings of the studies. The elimination of surface alignments is consistent with the positions adopted by communities located along the State Route 14 and East Corridor alignments, as well as the position of the Coalition, and will ensure that impacts to our communities are minimized.

Due to the delay in CHSRA's process and the subsequent lack of communication to impacted communities, our residents and businesses remain in a state of limbo as we eagerly anticipate information being shared by CHSRA staff. The Coalition requests that the Board produce a comprehensive list of studies that will be conducted as part of the environmental review process, complete with realistic deadlines for their completion, and make this list available to the public to provide residents with the most accurate and timely information related to these studies.

The recently published articles in the Los Angeles Times regarding the complications the CHSRA has experienced with the Project to date, questions related to the feasibility of the Project meeting deadlines and budget adopted by the CHSRA in their Draft 2014 Business Plan, and the subsequent letter from members of the Legislature representing communities impacted by the Project to the Speaker of the Assembly, signify the importance for the CHSRA to regularly provide the public with accurate information.

We call for your careful consideration and prompt response to these requests. Even if one or more of the proposed surface alignments are found to be technically feasible, there is no community support for any of these proposed alignments. We strongly urge you to act to

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eliminate the devastating impacts to all communities located within the Project Section. If you have any questions regarding the North Los Angeles County Communities Protection Coalition, please do not hesitate to contact Michael P. Murphy, Intergovernmental Relations Manager at (661) 255-4384 or by email at mmurphy@santa-clarita.com.

Sincerely,



Marsha McLean
Councilmember



Tim Ben Boydston
Councilmember

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cc: Members of the Santa Clarita City Council
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Senator Sharon Runner
Senator Robert Hertzberg
Senator Carol Liu
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