



March 15, 2016

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The Honorable Bob Kellar
Mayor
City of Santa Clarita
23920 Valencia Blvd., Suite 300
Santa Clarita, CA 91355

Dear Mayor Kellar:

I am writing to update you and your constituents on the progress of the environmental review of potential route alignments in the Palmdale to Burbank corridor, and important and positive changes we have made to those alignments. Updated alignment alternatives have been developed as a result of continued engineering and environmental technical evaluation, including environmental justice issues, as well as ongoing community and regulatory agency input.

Our analyses are being conducted under all applicable environmental laws. The process commences with establishing project purpose, need and objectives, which then leads to development of a potential set of alternative alignments. Those alignment alternatives are then evaluated and refined – as information becomes available from technical studies, regulatory agency input, public comment and other analyses – until a reasonable range of alternatives is established. That range of alternatives is then evaluated fully in the detailed environmental document.

We are now at a point in this process where we can establish a reasonable range of alternatives. Four sets of potential alignment alternatives have been under preliminary study over the past several years. Alignments along the State Route 14 (SR 14) follow that state highway and then proceed along San Fernando Boulevard through the communities of Sylmar, San Fernando and Pacoima, among others, before arriving at the planned station at the Burbank Airport. Additional alignments on the East Corridor – the E1, E2, and E3 routes– are largely subterranean routes under the San Gabriel Mountains.

The three alignment alternatives that will be carried forward for study in the draft environmental document are (see attached map):

- Refined State Route 14
- Refined E1
- Refined E2

Specifically, we have refined the alignment alternatives in order to, among other reasons:

- Reduce and largely avoid environmental justice impacts in the highly-populated communities of Santa Clarita, Sylmar, San Fernando and Pacoima.
- Reduce impacts in the Santa Clarita area.
- Improve future high-speed rail operations on all the alignments under study by making them less circuitous, thus allowing for more efficient, quicker service.
- Improve the constructability of all the alignments under study by decreasing the amount of technically challenging infrastructure.

EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
GOVERNOR



These three revised alignment alternatives will be detailed in a Supplemental Alternatives Analysis (SAA) Report on the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section and presented to the Authority Board of Directors at our monthly meeting on April 12, 2016. This meeting is being held in Anaheim at the Anaheim Convention Center.

The SAA will include details about the three alignment alternatives, and the environmental, technical and feasibility factors that went into these changes. The SAA will also review how the alignments affect – or avoid impacting – the Angeles National Forest, designated wilderness areas, and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument.

Pending concurrence from applicable regulatory agencies, these three alignment alternatives are those that we will move forward for full analysis in the environmental documents to be adopted – after full public review and comment – pursuant to all applicable environmental laws. The selection of the ultimate alignment will take place when the Board of Directors adopts the final environmental document, a decision currently scheduled for late 2017.

In closing, I note that the analysis of proposed route alignments involves a simultaneous assessment of many factors, including system constructability and operational requirements, habitat and species protection, geotechnical considerations, impacts on communities and so forth. There has been significant concern expressed by certain communities through which our potential alignments would pass that historic practice of imposing infrastructure projects on disadvantaged populations – *i.e.*, favoring other factors over environmental justice concerns – would become the norm. I want to assure you that the Authority has taken and will continue to take these concerns very seriously, and to the maximum extent of the law will not allow those concerns to be forsaken in favor of others.

We understand that the environmental review and ultimate selection of alignments can be a difficult process for those who may be impacted. That is why we strive to keep communities along our project sections informed and engaged.

Thank you for your continued participation in this process as we implement the high-speed rail program in Southern California. We value your input and welcome your comments. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions about this information.

Sincerely,



Dan Richard
Chairman, Board of Directors
California High-Speed Rail Authority

Attachment: Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Map

cc: Jeff Morales, Chief Executive Officer
Michelle Boehm, Southern California Regional Director