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May 17, 2013

Ms. Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration
Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

**Re: STB Finance Docket No. 35724, California High-Speed Rail Authority
— Construction Exemption — In Merced, Madera and Fresno Counties, California**

Dear Ms. Brown:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), I write to oppose the request to once again extend the comment period on the California High-Speed Rail Authority's petition for an exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. §10901. TTD consists of 33 affiliated unions that together represent workers across all modes of transportation and we therefore have a significant stake in the timely commencement and completion of this project. Specifically, TTD member unions represent workers who will benefit from the jobs created when the California High-Speed Rail system constructs dedicated railroad track, orders domestically manufactured trainsets and operates high-speed passenger rail service.¹

Earlier this month, a group of U.S. Representatives petitioned the Surface Transportation Board (STB) to extend the comment period on the California High-Speed Rail Authority's petition for an exemption from the STB's application procedures until July 15, 2013. The 13 signatories, who expressed their desire "to ensure the project is properly regulated," called on the STB to delay any additional action until the end of a 90-day public comment period.

The STB already provided 42 days for interested parties to comment on the petition. The original deadline for replies to the California High-Speed Rail Authority's petition was April 16, 2013. On April 18, the STB extended the deadline to May 8, 2013, which allowed more than

¹ As STB members know, a number of railroad unions, including several TTD affiliates, have already submitted comments in this docket. We endorse their position and encourage the board to render a decision on the issue in short order.

Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO

815 16th Street NW / 4th Floor / Washington DC 20006
Tel: 202.628.9262 / Fax: 202.628.0391 / www.ttd.org
Edward Wytkind, President / Larry I. Willis, Secretary-Treasurer



twice the normal time for comment. The letter asking for another extension fails to specifically explain why more time is needed other than offering a vague observation that the public must have ample opportunity to comment. We maintain that the original comment period and the first extension meet and exceed this objective.

It is also relevant that the high-speed rail project that is the subject of this proceeding has been extensively debated and considered by both political leaders and citizens in California. As a result of these considerations, California voters passed Proposition 1A in 2008, the Governor of California supports high-speed rail, the state legislature has provided funding, the environmental review process allowed significant public input and the California High-Speed Rail Authority already published its business and financial plans. While these considerations do not substitute for STB review, the Authority's high-speed rail plan has been scrutinized for many years and is well known to interested parties.

The request for an extension has all the appearances of a dilatory tactic designed to halt construction and sideline this project all together. If construction commencement is delayed, costs will increase placing further financial strain on this project – a fact that signatories to the extension letter are well aware. This problem would be exacerbated by the fact that the over \$2 billion in federal Recovery Act grants would be placed at risk due to deadlines that limit when the grant money must be expended.

For these reasons I urge you to reject the extension request.

Sincerely,

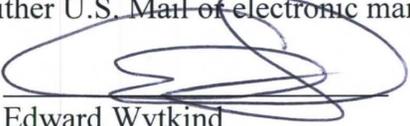
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Edward Wytkind', with a large, stylized flourish above the name.

Edward Wytkind
President

Appendix: Certificate of Service

I hereby certify that I have caused to be served one copy of the foregoing letter on the request for extension of the comment period regarding the STB's jurisdiction over the California High-Speed Rail Project and Reply to Petition to Exemption by either U.S. Mail or electronic mail.

Date: May 17, 2013


Edward Wytkind

Description	Name
Party Of Record:	Begeman, Ann D. Vice Chairman Surface Transportation Board Washington, DC 20423
Party Of Record:	Bender, Carol 13340 Smoke Creek Avenue Bakersfield, CA 93314
Party Of Record:	Bigelow, Frank State Capitol P. O. Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94249-0005
Party Of Record:	Birkey, Scott Preserve Our Heritage 555 California Street, 10Th Floor San Francisco, CA 94104
Party Of Record:	Boren, Tony Fresno Council Of Governments 2035 Tulare St., Suite 201 Fresno, CA 93721
Party Of Record:	Boxer, Honorable Barbara United States Senate Washington, DC 20510
Party Of Record:	Brown, Morris 140 Stone Pine Lane Menlo Park, CA 94025
Party Of Record:	Brown, Jr., Governor Edmund G. State Capitol, Suite 1173 Sacramento, CA 95814
Party Of Record:	Carlson, Colleen 1400 W. Lacey Boulevard, Bldg. #4 Hanford, CA 93230

Party Of Record:	Carlson, Raymond L. Griswold, Lasalle, Cobb, Dowd & Gin, L.L.P. 111 E. Seventh Street Hanford, CA 93230
Party Of Record:	Cook, Paul U.S. House Of Representatives 506 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Party Of Record:	Denton, Peter W. Nossaman Llp 1666 K Street, Nw, Suite 500 Washington, DC 20006
Party Of Record:	Descary, William C. 604 Plover Court Bakersfield, CA 93309-1336
Party Of Record:	Eager, Lee Ann Economic Development Corporation 906 N Street, Suite 120 Fresno, CA 93721
Party Of Record:	Edelman, Richard S. O'donnell, Schwartz And Anderson, P.C. 1300 L Street, N.W., Suite 1200 Washington, DC 20005
Party Of Record:	Feinstein, Honorable Dianne United States Senate Washington, DC 20510
Party Of Record:	Flanagan, Lori Alview-Dairyland Union School District 12861 Avenue 18 1/2 Chowchilla, CA 93610
Party Of Record:	Fukuda, Aaron 7450 Mountain View Street Hanford, CA 93230
Party Of Record:	Garzilli, Nick 1134 Alta Loma Road # 205 West Hollywood, CA 90069
Party Of Record:	Hamilton, Kathy 121 Forest Lane Menlo Park, CA 94025

Party Of Record:	Harkey, Diane L. State Capitol P. O. Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94249-0073
Party Of Record:	Heglund, Andrew City Of Bakersfield 1600 Truxtun Avenue, 5Th Floor Bakersfield, CA 93301
Party Of Record:	James, Bill Jpods, Inc 9370 96Th Street N St. Paul, MN 55115
Party Of Record:	Janz, James Community Coalition On High Speed Rail 2995 Woodside Road Woodside, CA 94062
Party Of Record:	Konczal, Blake Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board 2125 Kern Street, Suite 208 Fresno, CA 93721
Party Of Record:	Martin, Charles Chowchilla Elementary School District PO Box 910 Chowchilla, CA 93610
Party Of Record:	Massaro, Steve Preserve Our Heritage PO Box 501 Chowchilla, CA 93610
Party Of Record:	Mcclintock, Tom U.S. House Of Representatives 434 Cannon Building Washington, DC 20515
Party Of Record:	Mehta, Anil 2941 San Dimas Street, Suite 104 Bakersfield, CA 93301
Party Of Record:	Morgan, Linda J. Partner, Nossaman, L.L.P. 1666 K Street, N.W., Suite 500 Washington, DC 20006
Party Of Record:	Oliveira, Frank

	Mel's Farm 8835 22Nd Avenue Lemoore, CA 93245
Party Of Record:	Patterson, Jim Assemblyman, Twenty-Third District PO Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94549-0023
Party Of Record:	Perea, Henry R. Fresno Work 2281 Tulare Street, Room 300 Fresno, CA 93721
Party Of Record:	Peterson, Thomas F. City Of Prairie Du Chien P. O. Box 430 Prairie Du Chien, WI 53821
Party Of Record:	Rogers, David Board Of Supervisors County Of Madera 200 W. Fourth Street Madera, CA 93637
Party Of Record:	Scott, Alan 1318 Whitmore Street Hanford, CA 93230
Party Of Record:	Seals, Ronald V. Chowchilla Union High School District 805 Humboldt Avenue Chowchilla, CA 93610
Party Of Record:	Setty, Michael D. Train Riders Association Of California 1025 Ninth Street, Suite 223 Sacramento, CA 95814-3516
Party Of Record:	Sheys, Kevin M. Nossaman Llp 1666 K Street, N.W., Suite 500 Washington, DC 20006
Party Of Record:	Swearengin, Mayor Ashley City Of Fresno 2600 Freson Street Freson, CA 93721-3600
Party Of Record:	Taylor, Jeff 1624 Country Breeze Place

	Bakersfield, CA 93312
Party Of Record:	Upton, Kole Findley M. Upton Trust P. O. Box 506 Chowchilla, CA 93610
Party Of Record:	Vidak, Andy 13775 Lacey Boulevard Hanford, CA 93230
Party Of Record:	Wagner, Donald P. State Capitol P. O. Box 942849 Sacramento, CA 94249-0068
Party Of Record:	Walters, Carol 13343 Grangeville Boulevard Hanford, CA 93230-9695
Party Of Record:	Wolter, Pamela C. Acton And Agua Dulce 3942 West Sierra Highway, Suite 5 Acton, CA 93510
Member Of Congress:	Calvert, Honorable Ken Us House Of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Campbell, Honorable John U.S. House Of Representatives 2331 Rayburn Building Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Costa, Honorable Jim Congress Of The United States Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Denham, Honorable Jeff Subcommitte On Railroads, Pipelines, And Hazardous Materials Committee On Transportation And Infrastructure U.S. House Of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Hahn, Honorable Janice Congress Of The United States Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Hunter, Honorable Duncan L. Us House Of Representatives

	Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Issa, Honorable Darrell U.S. House Of Representatives 347 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Lamalfa, Honorable Doug U.S. House Of Representatives 506 Cannon House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Lofgren, Honorable Zoe Us House Of Representative Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Mccarthy, Honorable Kevin Congress Of United States 2421 Rayburn House Office Building Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Mckeeon, Honorable Howard P. Buck Us House Of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Nunes, Honorable Devin U.S. House Of Representatives Longworth House Office Building Suite 1013 Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Rohrabacher, Honorable Dana Us House Of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Royce, Honorable Edward R. U. S. House Of Representatives Washington, DC 20515
Member Of Congress:	Valadao, Honorable David G. United States House Representatives 1004 Longworth House Office Building Washinton, DC 20515