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UNITED STATES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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The Honorable Cynthia T. Brown
Chief, Section of Administration, Office of Proceedings
Surface Transportation Board
395 E St. S.W., Room 100
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: Request for Extension of Time to file comments referring to the California High Speed Rail Authority's petition exemption Financial Docket 35724

Dear Chief Brown,

It is our understanding that the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) filed a petition on March 27th, 2013 under 49 U.S.C. sec. 10502 for exemption from the prior approval requirements of 49 U.S.C. sec. 10901, and a parallel motion to dismiss petition for exemption of the California High Speed Rail Authority. The CHSRA's petition states that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) lacks jurisdiction over its projected new rail line and that the rail line is not "part of the interstate rail network" as defined by 49 U.S.C. sec. 10501(a)(2)(A).

The CHSRA's decision to not apply for an STB determination yet again exhibits a lack of cooperation with the impacted communities and should not be tolerated. Had CHSRA applied for a STB determination, all interested parties would have been given the necessary time to present public comments and all relevant evidence on the matter. The last minute request for exemption and the concurrent request for an expedited process should not diminish the ability of the public's right to participate fully in the vetting of this project by the STB. For this reason, we are requesting at least a 30 day extension on the comment period. All interested parties should be allowed sufficient time to review statements made by the CHSRA and respond with their own accounts and grievances with the project.

For over two years, the constituents in my district have been trying to work with CHSRA, only to be met with veiled promises to work with the people. The CHSRA's refusal to work with the people has subjected my district to a project that only brings severe impacts with very little benefit. The CHSRA continues to ignore these impacts. Subjecting landowners to uncertainty and stress in their daily lives brought on by a lack of community engagement on the part of CHSRA is unacceptable. We have heard from many of our constituents who are deeply troubled that the California High Speed Rail project will adversely affect their quality of life, environment, and economy. Allowing CHSRA to dictate their own future without being held accountable by the STB will result in additional funds being drained from our already depleted

state and federal coffers and impact the quality of life of many of my constituents without giving them the assurance of proper oversight and consideration by the Surface Transportation Board.

Given the STB's role as both an adjudicatory and a regulatory body for the economic affairs of the rail industry, we believe with absolute certainty California High Speed Rail falls within the STB's jurisdiction and should be considered by the STB under regular order. It should be noted that the plans set forth by the CHSRA at face value intend to impact existing air travel, existing passenger rail service (Amtrak) and freight rail within our districts and throughout the nation. As proposed by the Authority, they are also requiring a significant amount of federal funding, which will in turn impact future transportation funding nationwide. We appreciate your thorough review of the considerations outlined above and look forward to receiving your response and sharing it with our constituents.

Sincerely,



David G. Valadao
Member of Congress