

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 8, 2013

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Ann D. Begeman
Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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The Honorable Francis P. Mulvey
Commissioner
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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May 8, 2013
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Dear Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman Begeman, and Commissioner Mulvey:

We write to respectfully urge the Surface Transportation Board to give full and fair consideration to the petition for exemption filed by the California High Speed Rail Authority (Authority) for the construction of the Madera to Fresno section.

As you know, California is in the midst of constructing the nation's first, true high-speed rail system, which will modernize California's transportation system, generate needed economic development during the construction phase, and create the conditions for robust job creation for years to come in the San Joaquin Valley and across the state. We welcome the Surface Transportation Board's (Board) careful consideration of this important project, and we thank the Board for extending the deadline for public comments on the Authority's petition from April 16 to May 8, 2013, to ensure full public participation.

We strongly believe that the Board's appropriate review of the project should not result in lengthy delays. The first phase of the project is located in California's San Joaquin Valley, a region of the country that suffers from double-digit unemployment, an unacceptably high rate of foreclosure, and a slowly recovering economy. Unnecessarily delaying this project will be yet another hit to the regional economy that urgently needs the jobs and economic development that the California high-speed rail system will bring. In addition, small businesses in California that will benefit from the project are seeking a clear timeline for construction. Significantly delaying the project will inject avoidable uncertainty into the private sector.

Numerous federal, state, and local agencies have reviewed the Authority's environmental documents and business plans. With this in mind, we look forward to the Board's full and fair consideration.

Sincerely,


ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress


JANICE HAHN
Member of Congress


JIM COSTA
Member of Congress