

February 21, 2014

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

ENTERED  
Office of Proceedings  
March 7, 2014  
Part of  
Public Record

**Re: California High Speed Rail Authority Petition for Exemption of Fresno to Bakersfield HST Section (Finance Docket No. 35724 (Sub-No. 1))**

Dear Ms. Brown,

Before the STB makes any decision regarding the California High Speed Rail Authorities petition for exemption, the citizens of California must be given the opportunity to address the STB in public hearings and the hearings need to be held in California. There is a important information that must be conveyed by California citizens.

The current HSR plan that the Authority is trying to implement will adversely affect the current Amtrak rail system. Amtrak enables the citizens of the San Joaquin Valley to get to work, to get to school, and enjoy the treasures of the Valley. Many of the Amtrak stations will be eliminated because of the HSR, which means the HSR will not allow the riders to get to their destination. This will have a negative and expensive effect on employees and students. An Amtrak ticket is affordable, which encourages ridership. The High Speed Rail ticket price is many times more than the current Amtrak ticket and it will keep many people from using the rail to their advantage. Amtrak is meeting the needs of the citizens, it is affordable and convenient.

The environment impact of the High Speed Rail is another reason the exemption should not be granted. The current plan for the High Speed Rail is not for an electric train, but a diesel train, which we have now. The accelerated speed of the HSR will only add more environmental hazards to our lives.

There are not enough funds available to build the HSR. The Authorities HSR plan at this point is only 15% complete, yet they want no accountability attached to their plans and actions' now or in the future.

If the STB grants the exemption to the HSR Authority, then you are giving the Authority the freedom to continue with their plans with no over sight by any agency and no accountability to any agency. No one, nor any business, nor any entity has carte blanche to just go their way with

no accountability. All of us have to meet and comply with guidelines, accountability, and standards as we go through this life. If we do not comply, then there are consequences. No one and no entity is exempt from this accountability and the HSR Authority should not be exempt.

Common sense must prevail with your decision regarding their request for the exemption. In our society, oversight and accountability is in place for a reason, they protect the citizens of this country, individually and as a whole.

There are a myriad of facts and documents that support the denial of this exemption request. Please deny the exemption request and protect the citizens of California. At the very least, we are asking for a public hearing in California so the citizens can speak and you can hear.

Joyce Cody

7813 13th Ave.

Hanford, CA 93230