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May 20, 2013

Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001

RE: Docket number FD 35724 / California High-Speed Rail Project
Comments on Need for Expedited Decision

Dear Members of the Board:

This letter is in response to a letter filed by the California High Speed Rail Authority ("Authority"), regarding the request of several California Congressmen that the period for receiving comments be extended to July 15, 2013, to permit more citizens and organizations to participate in this proceeding. The intention of this letter is to highlight one issue. Specifically, the Community Coalition on High-Speed Rail ("CC-HSR") wants the Board to be aware that there is no looming loss of federal grant funding that should compel the Board to sacrifice a full and normal review of the project, prior to making what will surely be a tremendously consequential decision for the nation's rail system, and for the State of California.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority has requested that the Board "expedite" its decision on whether or not to grant an exemption for the proposed project, and has asked the Board to make a decision on the Authority's exemption request or before June 17, 2013. CC-HSR has previously noted that the Authority choose to apply late, well understanding, several years ago, that the STB would have to grant an approval of the proposed project. This letter is to add one further observation.

The justification for the Authority's request for expedited treatment, as found in its petition, is that the Authority needs to be able to "award contracts" for design and construction in the Spring or Summer of this year. But why should making that contract award be so critical that it should trump a full review by the STB, on a project that is both complex and not yet fully "jelled" in terms of specifics? (As an example of this last point, the project is sometimes described by the Authority as a 65-mile construction project, and sometimes as a 29-mile project, while the project actually designated by the Authority as the official "usable segment" extends a much longer distance, from Merced to the San Fernando Valley).

CC-HSR is concerned that the Board has been given the impression that if the Board does not act immediately the Authority will have to forfeit a significant portion of its federal ARRA grants for the project. If the STB were to take any such claim at face value, it might want to rush the normal process, to the detriment of a full and adequate review.

The Community Coalition on High Speed Rail is a grassroots, non-profit corporation, based on the San Francisco Peninsula, that is working through public advocacy, litigation, and political action to make sure the proposed California High Speed Rail project doesn't adversely affect the economy, environment, or quality of life of California's existing communities. For more information please visit: www.cc-hsr.org. You may contact CC-HSR by mail at 2995 Woodside Road #400-362, Woodside, CA 94062.

In fact, the Authority has entered into a December 2012 agreement with the FRA to suspend California's matching-fund requirement until April 2014, or until the sale of Proposition 1A bonds (whichever comes first), and this allows the project to be funded entirely with federal ARRA funds for that period. There is also nothing to prevent the CHSRA and the FRA from agreeing to extend that period from 2014 until 2015, or even further into the future.

In other words, the Authority has already arranged that virtually all of the \$3.3 billion of federal ARRA funds can be spent by September 2017, even though construction will go on after that date, utilizing funding from the remainder of deferred Proposition 1A matching funds and FY 2010 federal funds that do not have a time limit.

CC-HSR urges the STB to undertake a full and comprehensive review of a project that could, as we have noted before, end up being a detriment, not an advance, in terms of the nation's railroad system.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James R. Janz". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "R".

**James R. Janz, President
CC-HSR Board of Directors**

PROOF OF SERVICE

I am over the age of eighteen years and not a party to the within entitled action; my business address is One Embarcadero Center, Twenty-Second Floor, San Francisco, CA 94111-3711.

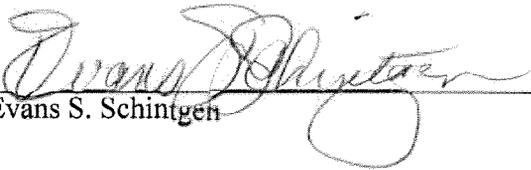
On May 21, 2013, I served the attached **Letter Re: Comments Concerning STB's Reliance on and Recirculation of the FEIR/FEIS for Proposed Merced to Fresno Section of the California High-Speed Rail Project (Docket No. FD 35724) and Addendum** on the interested parties in this action as follows:

SEE ATTACHED SERVICE LIST

BY MAIL: I enclosed the document(s) in a sealed envelope or package addressed to the persons at the addresses listed in the Service List and placed the envelope for collection and mailing, following our ordinary business practices. I am "readily familiar" with the firm's practice of collection and processing correspondence for mailing. Under that practice it would be deposited with the U.S. postal service on that same day with postage thereon fully prepaid at in the ordinary course of business.

I declare under penalty of perjury under the laws of the State of California that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on May 21, 2013, at San Francisco, California.



Evans S. Schintgen

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