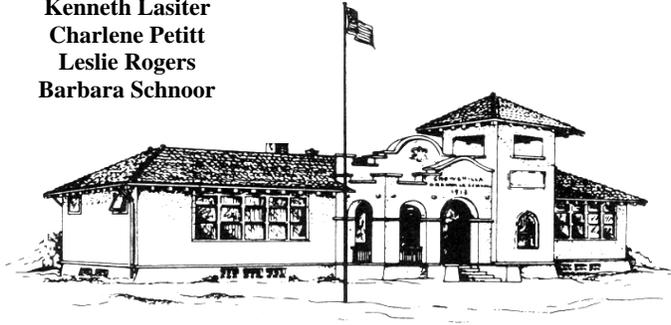


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# CHOWCHILLA ELEMENTARY SCHOOL DISTRICT

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234032

April 5, 2013

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  
April 5, 2013  
Part of Public Record

Re: Application by California High-Speed Rail Authority

Dear Ms. Brown:

This letter is submitted on behalf of the Chowchilla Elementary School District, located in Chowchilla, California. Our District consists of 5 elementary school sites which feed directly into the Chowchilla Union High School District. Our schools are geographically spread throughout the city and rural areas. On a normal day our buses travel more than 775 miles, and transport more than 1,100 of our 2,100 student population. The construction of the high speed rail will directly impact more than 359 families living in the rural areas of our district "multiple" times each day. Additionally, specific to Fairmead Elementary School which is located in the middle of the proposed "Wye Connections" an additional 380 families will be impacted who transport their children to and from that school daily.

The District continues to be concerned with the path that the California High Speed Rail Authority is taking in pursuing the California High Speed Rail Project (HSR Project). Residents in California were misled in 2008 when the Authority and the California Legislature requested that the voters of California approve a \$9.95 billion bond to support the HSR Project. Under false information the voters approved this measure, which is commonly referred to as Proposition 1A and expected that a high-speed rail project spanning from San Francisco to Los Angeles with connections to Sacramento and San Diego would be built by 2020 for approximately \$68 billion. Further complicating the project is the fact that only \$6 billion has been identified for construction and the financing plan that relies almost exclusively on private sector investment and the Federal government, of which neither has come to the table with any funds beyond the \$6 billion.

As much as this is a troubled project from a financial perspective, this project stands to have significant impacts on our local agricultural communities and our local existing home to school transportation systems. The Authority has based their alignment decisions on early closed door meetings between politicians and engineers, which have lead to the alignments traveling along the east-side of the Central Valley of California. What lies in the way of the alignment are school districts, multi-generational farming operations, low-income communities, and existing freight and inter-city passenger rail systems. The proposed HSR Project will interfere with each of these in a significant manner, and all of which have been downplayed and/or ignored by the Authority.

The district understands that 49 USC 10901 provides that no party can “construct an additional line” or “provide transportation over, or by means of, an extended or additional railroad line,” unless “the Board [Surface Transportation Board] issues a certificate authorizing such activity.”

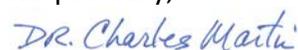
The district also understands that, under 49 USC 10502, an applicant can file a petition for exemption from the certification requirement of 49 USC 10901. In such a case, the Surface Transportation Board (STB) would take evidence and determine whether it should exempt the proposed project from STB’s certification requirement. However, it is also a further understanding that, as of March 20, 2013, the CHSRA has not filed with the STB either an application for certification of its projects or a petition for exemption. Yet providing another agency an excellent example of the contempt the HSR Projects has for following procedures. They are simply put a bully; and do not consider the impacts the HSR Project will have in the less affluent regions in the state unable to uphold a protest. This is an excellent opportunity to stand up for what is right, to support the silenced majority, and halt an out of control project that has the potential to fiscally cripple our state.

We implore you to please open this project up for a full investigation. Per your duties as an agency to oversee passenger rail service and freight rail service, this project has a significant chance of creating negative impacts. As a part of this investigation we also request that it be carried out in a public fashion, with all attempts made for hearings to be held in California. The public has continually been mislead by the Authority and has had to work diligently to counter this misinformation being provided by the Authority staff and cadre of consultants. The public should be afforded all opportunity to relay concerns and issues with your board.

We would like to keep apprised of this issue in the future and any notices or findings on this case can be sent to me at the address or email address provided in this letter.

We appreciate your time and attention in this manner and look forward to providing future comments and concerns.

Respectfully,



Dr. Charles Martin  
Superintendent