

March 6, 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

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**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,

I am concerned about and take issue with the Authority's cavalier attitude toward the matter of "time of travel" and level of service and the resultant effect it will have on our; economic and fiscal environment, physical and social environments, mental and emotional health, and people's lives and well being in general.

The Authority provides numerous pieces of printed matter stating that the High Speed Train (HST) will operate at speeds of 220 mph and achieve travel times of 30 minutes between San Francisco (SF) and San Jose (SJ) and 2:40 between (SF) and Los Angeles (LA). These data are more than likely arrived at using a simplistic distance-speed-time algorithm, as they never mention "real life" situations and conditions such as; weather, visibility, lighting, track alignment, track condition, elevation changes, model and condition of the controller and the rolling stock assembled, and the station and urban requirements and numerous other elements which go into what the final speed-time condition will be, and this modeling scenario is predicated on one trip in each direction for a "High Speed Rail System."

The fact of the matter is that their plans call for a train in each direction every 10 minutes during the day. That amounts to twelve trains past any given point every hour. I can only imagine the effect that this will have on the lives of the people living in the SF Bay area and the Central Valley. How will they conduct their lives with the commuter train schedules subservient to that of the HST. Services and life in general continually interrupted. Trains entering and leaving stations at the maximum allowed acceleration in order to attempt to achieve the required speeds. Then roaring through and past smaller central valley communities with no hope of them ever stopping to provide this train service to them. Then leaving the Central Valley with a long, hopefully slower pull up the top of the mountains followed by a 220 mph drop off the mountain as they head for LA, all the while sharing the track with slower freight trains. Not an appealing image

This scenario is to be played out numerous times a day with a dubious alignment, track-sharing with slower freight service, cars, wheels, axels and most of all brakes not used or even considered by other High Speed Rail operators around the world, and in fact, the equipment doesn't even exist today.

The HSR is scheduled to initiate service with diesel powered equipment nowhere near capable of reaching that lofty goal of 220 mph to achieve HSR status. How will this be any better than the service currently offered by Amtrak and CalTrain? How many years, or even generations will we be paying for but not receiving anything that comes close to resembling the level of service alluded to in the many brochures produced by the Authority and that saturate our state, and the promises that Proposition 1A were to make come true.

Yes, I am concerned. I'm concerned that my current level of rail service will be no more. I'm concerned that a large scar will be carved down the center of my state in the name of progress and the money will run out to fix it let alone think of completing it. I'm concerned about the dairies and farms that will be affected and maybe even gone. I think about the schools, churches, barns, homes and businesses that will be affected. I wonder about the ponds, streams, rivers and canals and the wildlife that is dependent on them and how they will be affected. I think about the very air that I and my neighbors inhale and how it will only become worse before it ever begins to get better. Yes, I am concerned

I appreciate the willingness of the STB to allow time for this dialogue regarding the current proposed HSR Project.

As all Californians will be directly affected by this project, I ask that the STB not grant an oversight exemption to the Authority and that you consider holding public hearings in California so that our citizens can have an opportunity to convey critical and important information to the STB before any decisions are made and that you might see firsthand the effects of what they are proposing. I don't believe that your granting of this request would cause a problem to the Authority and their current construction schedule.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ross Browning". There is a small date "9/11" written above the end of the signature.

Ross Browning
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Chief, Section of Administration
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My daughter submitted with her computer to:

[http://www.stb.dot.gov/stb/Other_Submissions.nsf/wCorrespondence?
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**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,

I am concerned when I read and hear about what the high speed rail people are planning to do which affects my state, my county, and my farm. I'll soon be 92 years old and I've been around the block a few times and have heard most of the get rich schemes and other scams that I need to know about.

We settled here in this valley in 1943 to have a place of our own and a nice place to raise a family. Things have been pretty much the same here over all these years. People have come and gone, farms have been bought and sold but in all that time everyone had a respect for the land. We've had a few roads and other projects put in during this time but they always took account of the land and water canals and put their roads in along laterals and perpendicular where they could. There was a respect for the waterways that crossed the land, they were there for a reason, they brought the water needed by the crops to grow. We had to follow county rules and ordinances whenever anything was moved, built or changed.

Now I understand that the rail authority want to be exempt from environmental rules that have been put in place to protect all Californians. They say that the rules are too tough and too restrictive. Well, if the rules are too hard to follow, change the rules. If you can't get the rules changed it must be because the rules are needed to protect us from whatever it is that the authority is trying to do.

I think that it would be wrong to grant the authority an exemption to the current rules without hearing from other Californians and seeing exactly what it is that they are trying to do, or hide, or change.

You have a very important job to do and I want you to know that I appreciate all that you're doing for us. I understand that you might hold public hearings in this area, I probably won't go to them but there are a lot of good folks that would go and talk to you and your people. That might be a good thing. Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,

Agnes Morrison
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