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December 10, 2013

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

Subject: Time Extension to Reply to STB Finance Docket No. 35724 (Sub-No. 1), California High-Speed Rail Authority Construction Exemption, in Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern County

Dear Ms. Brown,

The Citizens for California High Speed Rail Accountability (CCHSRA) would like to request that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) extend the open review period to January 31, 2014 for public comments and opposition to the exemption being sought by the California High Speed Rail Authority (Authority) in STB Finance Docket No. 35274 (Sub-No. 1). CCHSRA and its members were only notified of the existence of this petition in early December as the STB had ruled that the petition request was being denied. The ability to provide meaningful and detailed comments by December 24, 2013 is complicated by the upcoming holiday season as our organization will not be meeting to allow members to prepare and enjoy time with family and friends.

CCHSRA is a grassroots organization that formed to represent agricultural landowners in Kings County, California as the Authority planned various alignments that meander through prime-agricultural farm ground. Kings County, being mainly composed of rural agricultural communities was ignored during the planning process, and during alignment selections became the focal point of a great deal of concern surrounding the design and planning of alignments for the California High-Speed Rail Project (HSR Project).

Over the last two years, CCHSRA and its members have made it a priority to understand the HSR Project and engage in the execution of the project both at the local and the state level. Members have attended every Authority Board meeting, all state hearings, local meetings, meetings in other areas throughout the state and have even testified in front of the legislature on this topic. Members have also fully participated in reviewing the California Environmental Quality Act - Environmental Impact Report and the National Environmental Protection Act - Environmental Impact Statement. Members have provided over 700 pages of environmental comments and concerns along with coordinating a thorough review of the documents utilizing professional consultants in specialized fields.

With a wealth of knowledge and information, CCHSRA intends to provide comments regarding the exemption being requested by the Authority. This information will be key to your decision

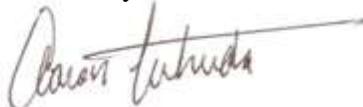
in authorizing an exemption and CCHSRA is committed to providing this information in a clear and concise fashion. In order to do this we kindly request an extension in the public review and response period as the amount of information being considered for submission is voluminous and detailed. Also, contrary to what the Authority is proposing, this project is much greater than the section being described in the papers that were filed.

We also recommend that the STB consider giving notice to all impacted landowners in the Fresno, Kings, Tulare and Kern counties, as these landowners may not be aware of the process that is taking place. The information needed to notice these individuals can be obtained easily from the Authority. In the past, the Authority failed to notify individual landowners directly of their impacts, which has created grave transparency concerns. Even regarding this petition, the Authority did not discuss this within its Board meetings, notify any impacted landowner, nor posted any public notice. Most if not all of the public was only notified of the petitions by means of the media that reported on the STB ruling. We hope that the STB will provide this transparency and allow impacted landowners to participate in the decision making process.

CCHSRA respectfully requests that the STB extend the public comment period on FD No. 35724 (Sub-No. 1) to January 31, 2014 to allow our organization and others appropriate time to provide concise and meaningful comments. We also request that our organization be notified of any future notices or petitions concerning the California High Speed Rail project.

We would appreciate notice of an extension as soon as possible to properly allocate time for a reasonable response to the exemption being sought by the Authority. If you have any questions or comments, please do not hesitate to contact me at (559) 707-8928 or via email at afukuda77@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aaron Fukuda". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above the printed name.

Aaron Fukuda
Co-Chair CCHSRA

cc:
California High Speed Rail Authority
Congressman Valadao
Congressman Denham
Congressman McCarthy
Mr. Mike LaSalle