

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 15, 2013

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Ann Begeman
Vice Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW 234244
Washington, D.C. 20423

The Honorable Francis Mulvey
Commissioner
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20423

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Office of Proceedings
May 15, 2013
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Public Record

Dear Chairman Elliott, Vice Chairman Begeman, and Commissioner Mulvey:

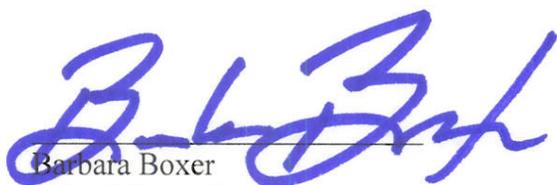
California is on the verge of constructing the nation's first high-speed rail system. This project, which has been decades in the making, has the potential to transform California's transportation system, enhance urban and rural community development, spur economic growth, and foster job creation throughout the state.

The Surface Transportation Board (STB) is currently considering the California High-Speed Rail Authority's "Petition for Exemption" to allow the Authority to begin construction of the initial Merced to Fresno section. The Board originally granted 20 days of public review and comment on March 27th, and later extended that deadline by another 20 days to May 8th. This extension allowed more accessibility and opportunity for interested parties to provide valuable analysis and comment.

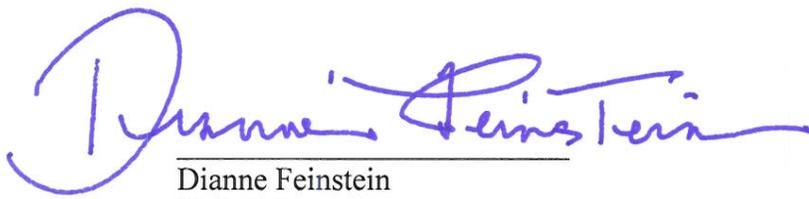
We thank the Board for its diligence and inclusive efforts at gathering public opinion, and we appreciate the Board's fair and thorough consideration of the petition. Regardless of the ultimate decision on the exemption itself, we urge the Board to be mindful of the Authority's proposed timeline for awarding design and construction contracts in mid-June and beginning construction in mid-July. Therefore, if the Board does ultimately decide to grant the exemption, we urge you to announce your final decision with sufficient notice to allow the Authority to move forward with its construction plans for the summer.

We look forward to the Board's full and fair resolution to this matter.

Sincerely,



Barbara Boxer
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator