

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 09, 2014

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FD 35861

The Honorable Daniel R. Elliott III
Chairman
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW, Suite 100
Washington, D.C. 20423

ENTERED
Office of Proceedings
December 9, 2014
Part of
Public Record

Dear Chairman Elliott:

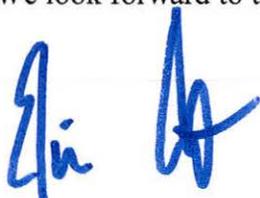
We write to respectfully urge the Surface Transportation Board to give full and fair consideration to the October 9, 2014, petition filed by the California High-Speed Rail Authority (the Authority). The petition requested that the Surface Transportation Board issue a declaratory order concerning the availability of injunctive remedies under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

We fully support a thorough environmental review of the California High-Speed Rail project to ensure our environment and agricultural resources are protected. In our view, this review can be adequately accomplished under CEQA or the federal National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Moreover, we strongly support the construction of the California High-Speed Rail project because we know this project will modernize California's transportation system, improve our environment, and create the conditions for short and long-term economic growth in the Central Valley and across the state. The voters of California approved state funding for this project, and California's courts have recently upheld the expenditure of these state funds. In addition, this year the California legislature approved continuous expenditure of "Cap and Trade" revenues to support the project. Construction on the project is already underway and will accelerate next year. Efforts to halt the project will only deprive Californians from the job opportunities that this project will bring.

It is not our purpose to argue the substantive merits of how CEQA is affected by the Board's prior determination that NEPA supersedes the state statute in terms of railroad expansion. The Authority has asked for clarification on that question, which seems an entirely appropriate request. We believe the Surface Transportation Board, without interference from Members of Congress seeking to kill the project, is in the best position to determine that legal issue.

We look forward to the Board's full and fair consideration of the Authority's request.



JIM COSTA
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress

JANICE HAHN
Member of Congress