



March 6, 2021

Tom Richards, Chair
California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA)
boardmembers@hsr.ca.gov
770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento CA 95814

RE: Support for CHSRA Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan

Dear Honorable Chair Richards,

I am writing in strong support of CHSRA's Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan that utilizes \$4.1 billion in remaining Prop 1A bond funds to complete the delivery of the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Service with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera to provide electrified, high-speed rail (HSR) service to Californians at the earliest possible time. By initiating electrified, high-speed rail in the Central Valley, California is demonstrating the viability and transformative nature of this type of transportation megaproject. The plan ensures that the project is delivered as quickly and efficiently as possible while realizing the mobility, environmental and economic benefits that fully electrified high-speed rail will bring to California.

With 350 miles of electrified high-speed rail under development and construction, California continues to demonstrate its leadership and long-term vision for a better future. The CHSRA's policy recommendations, as laid out in the Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan, will expand the project in the Central Valley to 171-miles of electrified high-speed rail while maintaining investments to provide greater connectivity and more reliable operations statewide. High-speed rail has the potential to get more pollution emitting cars off our congested roads and highways and people onto public transit, which is imperative to improving the air quality of communities with some of the nation's highest levels of pollutants.

The EDC works tirelessly to attract, expand, and retain businesses and jobs in Fresno County. We have witnessed first-hand the positive economic impacts of high-speed rail construction with contracts awarded to our small businesses, thousands of jobs created, and infrastructure improvements realized. The Merced to Bakersfield HSR Interim will create over 200,000 job-years of employment and \$38 billion in total economic activity. In fact, the first 119-miles of construction alone has dispatched over 4,000 workers to jobsites and supported more than 500 small and disadvantaged businesses. More than 73% of workers live within the Central Valley, a region that has failed to evade unabated poverty and unemployment.

During this past year, the EDC, in partnership with the City of Selma and CHSRA, launched the Central Valley Training Center which serves Fresno County's hardest-to-serve population helping them to eradicate poverty as well as their barriers to employment. Our 16 week pre-apprenticeship program prepares students for career opportunities with the high-speed rail, Caltrans and other construction jobs. Such investments in our community help ameliorate poverty while providing access to long-term, good paying jobs that the Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Service stands to provide.



Beyond the construction work being done in the Central Valley, investments being made by the High-Speed Rail Authority will reduce travel times for rail passengers between Sacramento and the Bay Area to Bakersfield by up to 90 to 100 minutes while doubling service frequency and rail ridership in the corridor.

Again, I am pleased to submit this letter of support for the proposed California High-Speed Rail Authority's Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan represents the quickest and most cost-efficient path towards realizing the significant benefits that a fast, clean, electrified high-speed rail service holds for Californians, and I look forward to continuing to work towards making that vision a reality.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Lee Ann Eager". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, flowing "L" and "E".

Lee Ann Eager
President/CEO