

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 22, 2021

Kyle Simerly
(916) 718-5733 (c)
kyle.simerly@hsr.ca.gov

California High-Speed Rail Marks Earth Day 2021 By Moving Toward Greener Construction

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – In celebration of Earth Day 2021, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is announcing it will require contractors use only zero-emission vehicles (ZEV) for their project fleets in all future construction contracts.

“High-speed trains will be California’s fastest and highest-capacity zero-emission vehicles,” said Authority CEO Brian Kelly. “As rail construction continues to ramp up, we need to keep driving our emissions down. That’s why we’re looking for new ways to make our construction practices even greener.”



At the 35 active construction sites spanning 119 miles in the Central Valley, the Authority mandates that contractor fleets be composed of newer, more fuel-efficient model years. But, with ZEV technology improving and more options becoming available, the Authority will now require 100% ZEVs for such fleets in future infrastructure construction contracts.

“This project is delivering a sustainable transportation future,” said Margaret Cederoth, Director of Sustainability and Planning for the Authority. “Our policy is zero-net greenhouse gas emissions and criteria air pollutants in construction, and to help us get there we want to leverage the ZEV market that California is spurring forward.”

This implementation strategy will drive harmful emissions closer to zero and is intended to keep harmful particulates out of the air in communities with poor air quality and high rates of asthma, like many near the high-speed rail project in the Central Valley.

Additionally, the policy leverages the scale of the project to create innovation in off-road construction equipment, which has a more difficult set of parameters to get to zero emissions. The Authority already mandates that all such equipment meet the highest emission standard set by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency— Tier 4. This policy has significantly reduced project emissions, eliminating 172,000 pounds of would-be criteria air pollution to date. This implementation strategy will go further, mandating that by 2030, where feasible, 10% of off-road equipment be ZEV, not just Tier 4, at the start of a contract. It further sets the goal of 100% ZEV for such equipment by 2035, where feasible.

This is the most recent step the Authority is taking to ensure California high-speed rail is the greenest infrastructure project in operation and construction. The Authority has captured or avoided more than 180,000 tons of greenhouse gas emissions through planting more than 6,000 trees and other forest projects. The project has also prevented more than 180,000 tons of construction materials from being sent to landfills with its 97% construction waste recycling rate.

In December, [the Authority received national recognition with the Envision Platinum rating for its sustainability efforts](#). The Envision Platinum rating is the highest-level award from the Institute for Sustainable Infrastructure, and it marked the first time a program the size and complexity of this project earned such an honor.

The Authority is responsible for planning, designing and building a 100% renewably powered high-speed rail service between San Francisco and Los Angeles and Anaheim, via the Central Valley. With the system capable of speeds above 200 miles per hour, the trip between San Francisco and Los Angeles will take under three hours.

Get up to speed on construction progress at www.buildhsr.com and for more on sustainability practices already underway at the Authority visit www.hsr.ca.gov/sustainability.

###