



CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL RESOLUTION #HSRA 22-01

CEQA Certification of the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS)

Whereas, pursuant to the California High-Speed Rail Act, Public Utilities Code Section 185000, et seq., the California High-Speed Rail Authority (“Authority”) was created in 1996 to direct the development and implementation of intercity high-speed rail service that is fully integrated with the state’s existing intercity rail and bus network;

Whereas, the Authority has chosen to use a tiered environmental review and decision-making process to select alignments and station locations for the high-speed rail (“HSR”) system;

Whereas, the Authority and the Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”) completed two first-tier, programmatic environmental documents pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”) for the statewide HSR system and approved general alignments and station locations for further study in second-tier, project-level environmental documents;

Whereas, the Authority and the FRA divided the statewide HSR system into individual project sections for second-tier environmental analysis, one of which is the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section;

Whereas, the Authority and the FRA initially commenced preparation of a second-tier Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section EIR/EIS in 2007 and subsequently split that section into two parts, leading to their commencing preparation of a Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section EIR/EIS in 2014;

Whereas, the Authority engaged in a public scoping process, development and screening of potential alternatives, and public and agency outreach efforts during the preparation of project-level technical studies and the Draft EIR/EIS, including the preparation of Alternatives Analysis reports to explore alignment alternatives in 2007, 2014, and 2016, and the continued refinement of alternatives and development of design options;

Whereas, through the alternatives refinement process between 2016 and 2018, the Authority determined that one alignment alternative for the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section, the “HSR Build Alternative,” was appropriate considering the constraints of this dense urban rail corridor and considering refinements to that alternative in response to public and agency comments;

Whereas, on November 15, 2018, the Authority Board concurred with the staff recommendation to designate the HSR Build Alternative as the Authority’s Preferred Alternative for the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section, as reflected in Resolution # HSRA 18-20;

Whereas, under 23 United States Code section 327, the FRA and the State of California executed a NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Understanding, dated July 23, 2019, pursuant to which the State of California, acting through the California State Transportation Agency and the Authority, assumed FRA's responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws, projects necessary for the design, construction, and operation of the California HSR System;

Whereas, in its role as CEQA and NEPA lead agency, the Authority circulated the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement ("Draft EIR/EIS") for a public review and comment period from May 29, 2020, to July 16, 2020, which designated the HSR Build Alternative as the Authority's Preferred Alternative and the CEQA Proposed Project;

Whereas, due to the uncertainty caused by the outbreak of COVID-19, the Authority extended the public review period for the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Draft EIR/EIS to August 31, 2020;

Whereas, the Authority determined it was appropriate to complete the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section environmental analysis in the form of a Final EIR/EIS, consistent with both CEQA and NEPA, because none of the circumstances meriting recirculation pursuant to State CEQA Guidelines section 15088.5, and supplementation pursuant to Code of Federal Regulations section 1502.9(c)(1)(ii) existed;

Whereas, on November 5, 2021, the Authority issued a Burbank to Los Angeles Final EIR/EIS and made it publicly available on the Authority website and provided broad public notice thereof.

Therefore, it is resolved:

The Authority hereby certifies that:

- a. The Burbank to Los Angeles Final EIR/EIS has been completed in compliance with CEQA;
- b. The Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Final EIR/EIS has been presented to the Authority Board as the decision-making body for the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section and the Board has reviewed and considered the information contained in the Final EIR/EIS, prior to considering whether to approve the Preferred Alternative for the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section; and
- c. The Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section Final EIR/EIS reflects the Authority's independent judgment and analysis.

Vote: 8-0

Yes: Schenk; Richards; Miller; Camacho; Ghielmetti; Pena; Escutia; Perea

No: N/A

Absent: N/A

Date: January 20, 2022