



Press Release

CONTACT: Lisa Marie Alley
916-384-9026 (w)
916 212-8108 (c)
lalley@hsr.ca.gov



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High-Speed Rail Authority and Madera/Merced County Agricultural Interests Reach Settlement Agreement on Remaining CEQA Litigation

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – In a major step forward, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), the Madera County Farm Bureau, Merced County Farm Bureau, Chowchilla Water District, Preserve Our Heritage and the Fagundes parties today announced that they have reached a settlement agreement. This settlement agreement brings to an end the final California Environmental Quality Act lawsuit challenging the Merced to Fresno project section Environmental Impact Report. The agreement provides for the preservation of important farmland and mitigation of effects of high-speed rail construction on agricultural operations.

The settlement agreement is a mutually beneficial agreement that integrates local expertise into the agricultural mitigation for the project section and provides protections for the agricultural community in Madera and Merced County and the Central Valley. The agreement also provides consultation on the Central Valley Wye to ensure that all concerns are addressed.

“On behalf of the Authority’s Board of Directors, we are committed to working in harmony with the agricultural community to preserve farmland in the Central Valley,” said Chairman Dan Richard. “This settlement clears the way for the Authority to move forward with construction of the first high-speed rail system in the nation and shows we can build high-speed rail while preserving precious resources.”

“We were able to achieve some significant additional protections for agriculture in Madera and Merced Counties,” said Tom Coleman, President of the Madera County Farm Bureau.

“This settlement brings the lawsuit to an end but begins a new chapter in working with the agricultural community to move the project forward,” said Jeff Morales, CEO of the Authority. “This agreement is evidence that the California High-Speed Rail Authority is working positively with all affected communities to address their concerns as we embark on this complex project.”

The court case was to be heard in Sacramento County Superior Court on April 19, 2013. This is the fourth legal case that the Authority has settled in recent weeks.

About California High-Speed Rail Authority

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is responsible for planning, designing, building and operation of the first high-speed rail system in the nation. By 2029, the system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours at speeds capable of over 200 miles per hour. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations. In addition, the Authority is working with regional partners to implement a statewide rail modernization plan that will invest billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines to meet the state’s 21st century transportation needs. To learn more visit the Authority’s website at cahighspeedrail.ca.gov and join us on [facebook.com/CaliforniaHighSpeedRail](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaHighSpeedRail) and follow us at twitter.com/cahsra/.

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