



# PUBLIC NOTICE

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY/NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

## NEPA-ONLY RELEASE AND NOTICE

*California High-Speed Rail –*

*Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye*

**DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/  
ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT**

This document was prepared by the Authority as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lead agency, as a supplemental to the 2012 Final Merced to Fresno Section Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS). The Authority completed the public review of the Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS) under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in May and June 2019 and is now releasing the same document for NEPA public review.

In July 2019, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) approved the State of California's application to participate in the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (commonly known as NEPA Assignment), via execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), under 23 U.S.C. 327. On July 23, Governor Newsom signed the MOU which assigns to the State the FRA's responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws. Under NEPA Assignment, the State, acting through the California State Transportation Agency and the Authority, assumes the FRA's role as lead federal agency for the California High-Speed Rail Project.

The Authority will respond to comments received during this present NEPA review period at the same time as it responds to comments that were received in May and June in response to the comment period conducted under the CEQA. The Authority will respond to comments received during both the NEPA and CEQA comment periods in a Final Supplemental EIR/EIS, planned for issuance in 2020.

### **PROPOSED PROJECT AND LOCATION**

The California High-Speed Rail Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is a supplement to the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS. The Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS identified the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative for the north/south alignment of the high-speed rail, but did not select a preferred alternative for the Central Valley Wye. The Authority Board of Directors certified the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS in May 2012. Although the Authority Board of Directors and FRA approved portions of the Hybrid Alternative outside the wye for the north-south alignment of the high-speed rail and the Downtown Merced and Downtown Fresno Mariposa Street station locations, these approvals deferred a decision on the area known as the "wye connection", that is, the east-west high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east to allow for additional environmental analysis.

The Central Valley Wye portion of the Merced to Fresno Section would create the east-west connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the approved Merced to Fresno alignment. The

Central Valley Wye is located in Merced and Madera counties near the City of Chowchilla with related electrical facilities extending into Fresno and Stanislaus counties.

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

The Authority has prepared this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, which evaluates the impacts and benefits of implementing a wye connection in the geographically limited area between the cities of Merced and Madera and is based on additional project planning and engineering that has occurred over the last several years. This Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS evaluates four Central Valley Wye alternatives: the State Route (SR) 152 (North) to Road 13 Wye, the SR 152 (North) to Road 19 Wye, the Avenue 21 to Road 13 Wye, and the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye. These alternatives would create the high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east.

The Authority developed these Central Valley Wye alternatives through extensive local and agency involvement, stakeholder meetings, and public and agency comments, and subjected them to a thorough screening process which considered the impacts of the alternatives on the social, natural, and built environment. The Authority has identified the Preferred Alternative in this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS as the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative.

## ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Significant pre-mitigation environmental effects resulting from the Central Valley Wye alternatives are anticipated in the following resource areas: air quality (construction impacts); noise and vibration (construction and project impacts); biological resources and wetlands (construction impacts); hazardous materials and wastes (construction impacts); socioeconomics and communities (construction impacts); agricultural lands (construction impacts); parks, recreation, and open space (construction impacts); aesthetics and visual resources (construction impacts); cultural resources (construction impacts); Section 4(f) (construction impacts); and environmental justice (construction and project impacts).

## NEPA PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

The Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is being made available to the public for a **45-day review and comment period** in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act. During the 45-day comment period, written comments may be submitted in the following ways:

- Via mail to “Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS,” 770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Through the Authority’s website ([www.hsr.ca.gov](http://www.hsr.ca.gov))
- Via email to [CentralValley.Wye@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:CentralValley.Wye@hsr.ca.gov) with the subject line “Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS Comment.”

The comment period is from **FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2019, to MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2019**. Comments must be received electronically, or postmarked, on or before **MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2019**.

The Authority will prepare a Final Supplemental EIR/EIS, which will include responses to comments received. The Final Supplemental EIR/EIS is anticipated for public release in summer 2020. The Authority will then review the information in the Final Supplemental EIR/EIS, including comments and responses, in considering whether to approve the preferred alternative.

## NEPA PUBLIC HEARING TO RECEIVE COMMENT

The Authority invites you to attend a Public Hearing that has been scheduled on **TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1, 2019**, to receive public and public agency comments under NEPA on the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. The hearing is scheduled from **3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** at the **Chowchilla-Madera Fairgrounds Little Theater - 1000 S. Third Street, Chowchilla, CA 93610**. Authority staff will be at the hearing to answer questions and receive written comments. Interpretes al español estarán en la reunión. At the hearing, members of the public may formally submit an oral comment on the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. The meeting facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities. All requests for reasonable accommodations and/or language services must be submitted 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting date. Please

contact the public outreach team at 800-881-5799 or call the California Relay Service at 711. All public hearings will be wheelchair accessible. Please call the Authority at (916) 324-1541, or check the Authority website ([www.hsr.ca.gov](http://www.hsr.ca.gov)), for more information, including up-to-date information on the planned hearing.

## **COPIES OF THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL EIR/EIS**

Visit the Authority website ([www.hsr.ca.gov](http://www.hsr.ca.gov)) to view and download the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. Technical reports that inform the analysis provided in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS and electronic copies on compact disc (CD) of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS are available upon request by calling (916) 324-1541. Printed and electronic copies of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS have been placed at the following public libraries and county clerk offices:

- Chowchilla Branch Library: 300 Kings Avenue, Chowchilla, CA 93610
- Madera County Library: 121 North G Street, Madera, CA 93637
- Merced County Library: 2100 O St, Merced, CA 95340
- Madera County Clerk: 200 W 4th St, Madera, CA 93637
- Merced County Clerk: 2222 M St, Merced, CA 95340

Printed and electronic copies of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, along with electronic copies of the associated technical reports, and the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS, also are available for review during business hours at the Authority's office at 770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1, Sacramento, CA, and the Authority's office at 1111 H Street, Fresno, CA.

The Authority does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

The Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS, as an electronic copy on CD, is also available upon request by calling (916) 324-1541. This document is not currently part of the public review and comment process in that it was completed and finalized in 2012, however, it is available for review and reference.

