

23 Business and Organization Comments

Part 1 of 4

Submission 210 (Annalisa Perea, May 2, 2019)

Merced - Fresno 2014+; Central Valley Wye - RECORD #210 DETAIL

Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 5/2/2019
Submission Date : 5/2/2019
Interest As : Business and/or Organization
First Name : Annalisa
Last Name : Perea
Submission Content :

Good morning,

210-1 | At your earliest convenience, please send the link to this document. The link provided in the May 3, 2019
Notice to Stakeholders letter lists an incorrect link. Thank you.

Regards,
Annalisa

Annalisa Perea, AICP, LEED AP
Senior Associate Planner
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[QKIncLogo.gif]

**QK's Fresno office has relocated to a new location in Clovis.
Our new office address is above.

Response to Submission 210 (Annalisa Perea, May 2, 2019)

210-1

The comment is unclear. It appears to indicate that an incorrect website link was provided for the Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). However, the Authority has confirmed that the link provided is operative:

http://hsr.ca.gov/Programs/Environmental_Planning/draft_supplemental_merced_fresno.html.

Submission 222 (Cathy Haworth, on behalf of H&H Farming Inc., May 23, 2019)

H & H FARMING, INC.
5611 E. Roosevelt Rd.
Chowchilla, CA 93610

May 20, 2019

Merced to Fresno Section
 Central Valley WYE Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS
 California High-Speed Rail Authority
 770 L Street
 Sacramento, CA 95814

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: Argument Against Alignment Regarding Road 11 WYE

I am a fourth generation farmer in Chowchilla, California where the Road 11 WYE alignment is proposed to go through properties that I farm, (almond orchards).

- 222-10 Due to the High Speed Rail Track and Road reconnection on the Road 11 property that I farm, it will make my property nonworkable, waste more land, because it will cut through my property to reconnect Road 11 and Avenue 25, which could be done into a way more usable than the plan proposed by the High Speed Rail Authority engineers.
- 222-11 No one from the High Speed Rail Authority ever contacted me to see what would be a workable plan for my property, or that would best suit the Road 11 reconnection to Avenue 25.
- 222-12 To date, we have never received a packet that was claimed to have been sent out to all property owners. My father, Gene Haworth, 10439 Avenue 25 ½, Chowchilla, CA 93610, is the property owner. I am the tenant/lessee, and who will inherit the Road 11 property. We have a second property on Avenue 23 ½ and Road 10 that is also affected in the curve of the WYE, which splits that narrow piece of property and destroys it from being used agriculturally, which I will also inherit. If the High Speed Rail goes through any of these properties, it will drastically reduce the resale value of prime agricultural land, due to the fact that no one wants to purchase properties adjacent to a high speed rail project.
- 222-13 This affects multiple sites on the Road 11 alignment which consists of homes, ranches, dairies, almond orchards, grape vineyards, natural streams and rivers, natural habitats, ferry shrimp, Chowchilla River, Indian camping and burial sites, bird sanctuaries, and historical landmark sites.
- 222-14 The proposed Road 11 WYE alignment will negatively affect numerous agricultural and domestic wells (due to the seismic vibration of trains going by every 15 minutes), that will need to be replaced at a cost to the High Speed Rail in the tens of millions of dollars. The vibration will destroy the well bearings when running, crack concrete and plastic lines, and damage lift pumps and filter stations. It will also negatively affect numerous pipelines, canal systems and retention ponds that outlying farms and dairies rely on for irrigation, that would need to be replaced in a timely manner that would not jeopardize the growing of permanent crops.

- 222-15 Electrification of Rail System: Another issue is the electrification of the rail system. It will greatly reduce the amount of power in this area. We already experience brownouts and blackouts. The High Speed Rail will put an enormous strain on the electrical grid in the Chowchilla area. With the overuse of power, this will raise our power rates to unrealistic levels, because no new power plants are forecasted fast enough to be built in the near future (hydroelectric dams, wind turbines, solar plants, nuclear power plants or coal fire plants). Adding more misery to the situation, our existing power grid is aged, overstretched and very vulnerable. It will not be able to handle the excess load of a high speed rail.
- 222-16 Existing Natural Habitats: There are numerous natural habitats that would negatively be affected by a high speed rail. These include the red tail hawks, condors, meadowlarks, eagles, buzzards, sand hill cranes, egrets and numerous migratory birds. These fowl reside year round in the area proposed for the high speed rail Road 11 WYE alignment, starting at Ranch Road and California 99, extending all the way to 152. These habitat also reside in the natural water ways, rivers and streams that would also negatively be affected by a high speed rail. Other endangered species include that of the kit fox, coyote, skunk, badger, raccoon and bobcat, not to mention the kangaroo rat and many other rat species. Plus, there are the reptilian population that would be disrupted. Then there are the aquatic creatures: the crayfish, crawdads, ferry shrimp, carp and frogs. For more information and clarity, you can look this up on the Endangered California Species List.
- 222-17 Pollination Problems: This will negatively impact the pollination of trees for every farmer affected by the Road 11 WYE alignment proposal. With trains going by every 15 minutes in this corridor, it will kill millions of bees, that farmers pay for to pollinate their trees, thus reducing our yields. It will also negatively impact the providers of the bees (beekeepers), as they will sustain heavy losses of their bee colonies.
- 222-18 Pollution: Another issue is that of construction pollution, due to the lengthy building time in sensitive environmental areas. Also, there is the issue of the high speed rail's construction equipment and trucking in our farming area, that will negatively impact our farming operations in the proposed Road 11 WYE area alignment. It will disrupt our normal cultural/farming practices (i.e. planting, irrigating and harvesting) on already existing and overburdened roadways.
- 222-19 Tax Revenue Problems: This creates more tax revenue problems for Merced and Madera Counties, due to the destruction of our existing county and rural roads that are already in need of replacement. With further heavy loaded trucks and equipment moving on these roads daily, this creates an unsafe road condition for residents and construction crews. These roads will need to be replaced at the cost to the High Speed Rail which will exceed millions of dollars. It should not overburden the people with more fuel tax and county taxes.
- 222-20 In the eyes of the rural people in this community, this high speed rail system is a blight on the agricultural landscape. For the farmers, dairymen and residents, it creates anger and frustration, knowing that we would have to look at this boondoggle of a disgrace every day of our lives. It will cause undue mental frustration and anger, further causing negative health issues. When seeing how small the ridership is on the existing AmTrak Line today, and in the future having to see an even smaller ridership on a high speed rail to nowhere, we need to cut our losses now and stop the building of the WYEs to nowhere (stopping at Carlucci Rd.) and tracks to where no one wants to go (Merced to Bakersfield).

Submission 222 (Cathy Haworth, on behalf of H&H Farming Inc., May 23, 2019) - Continued

222-21 | At the writing of this letter, to whatever authorizing agency that would look at and review this public comment, we need to also look at the Federal side of this boondoggle. The Federal Rail Authority is not signing the NEPA Plan, due to the fact that the Federal Government, under the Trump Administration, has stated that the California High Speed Rail Project has failed to accomplish its projected plan. Due to that failure, it is requesting that Billions of dollars be returned to the Federal Government, which will only incur a more expensive court battle with the Federal Government, and further loss of monies for the high speed rail project. We request the governing body to NOT pass the CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) environmental report. Please stop this over budgeted, unnecessary pipe dream of former Governor Brown, when we already have two failing rail systems (Amtrak and the Pacific Coastal Starlight Railway). We don't need a third!

Respectfully submitted,

Wendell and Cathy Haworth

Response to Submission 222 (Cathy Haworth, on behalf of H&H Farming Inc., May 23, 2019)

222-10

The comment regarding the land acquisition requirements of the Preferred Alternative is noted. The preliminary design evaluated in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS for each alternative is based on performance criteria and corollary design requirements for HSR. The Authority's design approach is guided by a series of technical memoranda, which reflect best engineering practices for HSR construction drawn from a wealth of international sources. Technical Memorandum 2.1.2, Alignment Design Standards for High-Speed Rail Construction, was a key consideration in the 15 percent design plans used in this environmental analysis.

In subsequent phases of the project, more advanced levels of design will occur. Advanced design may yield opportunities to reduce the amount of land that will need to be acquired. The Authority will determine whether full or partial acquisition of agricultural parcels will be necessary on a case-by-case basis during the right-of-way acquisition process.

Please also refer to Standard Response CVY-Response-AGRICULTURE-1: Severance of Agricultural Infrastructure Serving Important Farmland for a discussion of how roadway impacts related to parcel severance are addressed. Also, please refer to Standard Response CVY-Response-AGRICULTURE-2: Farmland Impacts - Remnant Parcels for a discussion of how unusable parcel remainders would be addressed.

222-11

As documented in Chapter 9, Public and Agency Involvement, the Authority made extensive efforts in conducting outreach to involved public agencies, stakeholder groups, and other interested parties. The Authority also sent notices of public meetings, document availability, and other milestones to these groups, including mailings to property owners. The Authority can confirm that notices regarding the availability of the environmental documents were sent to property owners, including three notices to Mr. Haworth at the addresses noted in submission MF2-222, comment 12.

222-12

The Authority mailed notices to all property owners within the project footprint, including three notices to Mr. Haworth at the noted address as well as at 10436 Avenue 23 1/2, and 10592 Avenue 25. The Authority will also add H&H Farming at the Roosevelt Road address to its mailing list for subsequent notices.

As documented in Chapter 9, Public and Agency Involvement, the Authority has conducted extensive mailings and other community engagement programs to obtain input and feedback on the proposed project.

Regarding the merits of the project, please refer to Standard Response CVY-GENERAL-1: Oppose HSR Project.

222-13

The comment notes some of the environmental effects of the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative. As described in Section 2.1.2.1, the Authority has evaluated numerous potential Central Valley Wye alignments that would allow for a connection between the north-south portion of the Merced to Fresno Project Section and the Bay Area to the west. As indicated in previous studies, including the Bay Area to Central Valley program environmental documents, multiple alternatives analysis reports, and the Checkpoint B alternatives screening documents, all potential Central Valley Wye alignments explored would affect communities, the natural environment, and cultural resources to varying degrees. It is not possible for the Central Valley Wye alignments to fully avoid all environmental impacts.

The Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS carried forward four alternatives, each with varying levels of impact on different resources. Chapter 8, Preferred Alternative, summarizes the Authority's process for identifying the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alignment as the Preferred Alternative, which balances feasibility and constructability with environmental effects.

Response to Submission 222 (Cathy Haworth, on behalf of H&H Farming Inc., May 23, 2019) - Continued

222-14

Section 3.4 of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, with reference to Section 3.4 of the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS and Section 7.2 of the Noise and Vibration Technical Report, notes that there would be no operational vibration impacts. This is because of the very inefficient propagation of vibration through the soils in the project vicinity, the low vehicle input force, and the presence of elevated structures, which provide significant attenuation for vibration levels in heavily populated areas, such as the area where vibration-sensitive receivers are located. Vibration from trains can travel efficiently only along the ground surface. Trains are typically not capable of generating enough vibration to dislocate below-ground facilities such as well pipes and bearings.

222-15

The HSR system, including the Central Valley Wye Alternatives, would obtain electricity from the statewide electricity grid. A 2016 transmission system study completed by Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E), California High Speed Train Project – Technical Study Report, Evaluation of Proposed Traction Power Substation Interconnections for Sites 4–13, determined what upgrades would be required for existing PG&E infrastructure to meet the projected power demands of the HSR system while maintaining service to existing utility customers. Upgrades would include replacing aging power lines and substations as needed to provide more reliable service. Chapter 2 of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS describes these upgrades by alternative.

During construction, planned temporary interruption of utility service may occur. A few design features would be implemented to limit the number of interruptions and avoid this burden on the public. The contractor is required to implement energy-saving measures during construction to avoid overburdening utility service providers (PUE-IAMF#1). For unavoidable service interruptions, the contractor would notify the public through a combination of media outlets (PUE-IAMF#3). The contractor would prepare a technical memorandum documenting how construction activities would be coordinated with service providers to minimize or avoid interruptions (PUE-IAMF#4).

222-16

Section 3.7.2 of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS outlines the federal, state, and local laws and regulations considered in the environmental analysis for biological resources. These include, among others, consideration of species listed as threatened, endangered, or candidate species under the California Endangered Species Act. Potentially affected special-status species are carefully considered through review of state and federal databases and lists. Tables 3.7-6 and 3.7-7 in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS were developed using this method. The tables list species that are considered rare or endangered in California, including those listed under the California Endangered Species Act, which warrant consideration under CEQA.

222-17

The Authority acknowledges that the HSR project may have indirect effects on adjacent Important Farmland as a result of wind induced by the HSR project during operation. Indirect impacts from wind-induced effects (e.g., pesticide drift, dust, pollination) are discussed in the Final Supplemental EIR/EIS (see Impact AG#7 for a discussion of wind-induced effects), which concluded that these effects would not result in additional conversions of Important Farmland to nonagricultural use. Potential impacts related to induced wind would be mitigated by distance, with wind speeds estimated to be approximately 3 miles per hour at the edge of the HSR right-of-way where trains pass by at 220 miles per hour. As discussed in both Section 3.7, Biological Resources and Wetlands, Impact BIO#27, and Section 3.14, Agricultural Farmland, Impact AG#7, this airflow at the edge of the HSR right-of-way would not be strong enough to interfere substantially with the flights of bees or agricultural activities such as insect pollination or aerial pesticide applications. The analysis concludes that HSR operations would not interfere with bee pollination.

Response to Submission 222 (Cathy Haworth, on behalf of H&H Farming Inc., May 23, 2019) - Continued

222-18

Regarding construction-period effects on air quality, including fugitive dust from construction, please refer to the analysis and conclusions in Section 3.3, Air Quality and Global Climate Change, Impact AQ#1. The Authority has incorporated a dust control plan into the project to reduce dust caused by construction, using measures that include washing vehicles before they exit the construction site, watering unpaved surfaces, and limiting vehicle speeds. Section 3.3 also describes mitigation measures for construction impacts on air quality.

Regarding construction-period effects on the use of rural roads, please refer to Section 3.2, Transportation, particularly Impact TR#1: Temporary Impacts on Major Roadways from Temporary Road Closures and Relocations, Impact TR#3: Temporary Impacts on Major Roadways and Truck Routes from Construction Vehicle Operations, and Impact TR#8: Temporary Construction Impacts on Rural Roadway Operations. All such effects would be less than significant; therefore, no mitigation would be required.

222-19

As described in Impact TR#6, Temporary Impacts on Major Highway Operations, page 3.2-40, and Impact TR#8, Temporary Construction Impacts on Rural Roadway Operations, page 3.2-42, of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, the Authority would protect public roadways during construction (TR-IAMF#1). This would include conducting a photographic survey prior to the start of construction to document the condition of the public roadways that would be used as truck routes. The Authority and its contractors would be responsible for repairing structural damage to public roadways caused by HSR construction, or construction access, and returning damaged sections to their original pre-HSR construction structural condition. As such, construction of the Central Valley Wye Alternatives would not shift the burden of roadway repairs onto local and regional agencies and therefore would not increase the tax liability of these agencies with respect to the repair of local roadways and highways.

222-20

Please refer to Standard Response CVY-Response-GENERAL-1: Oppose HSR Project and Standard Response CVY-Response-GENERAL-2: Alternatives Analysis and Selection for CVY.

222-21

The environmental review, consultation, and other actions required by applicable federal environmental laws for this project are being or have been carried out by the State of California pursuant to 23 U.S.C. 327 and a Memorandum of Understanding dated July 23, 2019 and executed by the Federal Railroad Administration and the State of California.

Although not related to the environmental review in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, the assertions regarding the performance of existing passenger rail lines are noteworthy. According to the California State Rail Plan (2018), Amtrak's San Joaquin line was the nation's seventh most-popular Amtrak route in 2016 (highest number of passengers). For the same time period, the Coast Starlight was Amtrak's second most-popular long-distance route in the nation.

Submission 235 (Bob Delp, Benchmark Resources, June 17, 2019)

Good morning. I am still interested in receiving your feedback on the questions below.

Thank you,

-Bob Delp

BENCHMARK RESOURCES

916.812.8122

From: Bob Delp, bdelp@benchmarkresources.com

Sent: Tuesday, June 4, 2019 12:43 PM

To: 'central.valley@hsr.ca.gov'; 'info@hsr.ca.gov'

Subject: HSR Merced to Fresno Mitigation Status

235-40

I am writing to request information regarding mitigation requirements, implementation status, and monitoring reports for the Merced-Fresno segment of HSR.

I see two similar documents on the HSR website: One is titled "Mitigation Monitoring and Enforcement Plan Merced to Fresno Section" (dated September 2012, Revision 1 April 2014) and the other is "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program Merced to Fresno Section" (dated Adopted May 2012; Revision 1 December 2012; Revision 2 August 2013). It's unclear to me if both of these documents are relevant to CEQA mitigation monitoring, and perhaps there is/are more recent versions that I did not find on the HSR website.

My questions are:

1. Which of the two documents listed above (or other document) is the guiding MMRP (for CEQA mitigation implementation) for the Merced-Fresno segment?
2. Was there a public/agency notification and hearings process for the revisions made to the document(s)?
3. Can you provide, or let me know where I can obtain, the monitoring reports documenting status and verifying that each measure has been and/or is being implemented as construction of the Merced-Fresno line proceeds?
4. Does HSR have plans to make further revisions to the mitigation measures and/or MMRP document(s) and, if so, will there be a public/agency notification and hearings process for such revisions?

Thank you,

-Bob Delp

BENCHMARK RESOURCES

916.983.9193 (office)

916.812.8122 (cell)

916.983.3016 (direct)

benchmarkresources.com

Response to Submission 235 (Bob Delp, Benchmark Resources, June 17, 2019)

235-40

To the extent the commenter is describing the approval documents in connection with the 2012 Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS, the question/comment is unrelated to any specific content or conclusions within the Central Valley Wye environmental document. With respect to the Central Valley Wye, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) will include a mitigation monitoring and reporting program (MMRP) as part of its Board of Directors' resolution for project approval.

Compliance with the mitigation measures is the responsibility of the Contractor with oversight by the Authority. EMMA (Environmental Mitigation Management Application), a program developed for the Authority, allows the Contractor to enter their compliance documentation specific to each construction site for biological, cultural, and some air quality measures in the MMEP. Authority staff review the Contractors' compliance documentation and determine if measures have been adequately met.

The EMMA program is populated with the MMEP since this document supersedes the MMRP. The EMMA program is relied upon as a single source to identify environmental measures that were adopted as part of the environmental document. The latest MMEP (September 2012, Revision April 2014) includes mitigation measures as described in the MMRP (Adopted May 2012, Review 1 December 2012).

A public citizen can request documentation of this compliance by submitting a public records request with the Authority via email at records@hsr.ca.gov or mail at California High-Speed Rail Authority, Public Records Officer, 770 L Street, Suite 620 MS1, Sacramento, CA, 95814.

Submission 237 (Ed McIntyre, Landmark Real Estate, June 18, 2019)



June 17, 2019

Attn: Merced to Fresno Section:
Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS

California High-Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: HSR Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report:
Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley WYE/Gordon Shaw
Properties Site

Dear CHSRA members,

237-42

I'm writing this letter to comment of the above referenced Draft Supplemental Environmental Report. The Supplemental Report will direct the CHSRA in choosing the last piece of the alignment that will connect Madera to San Jose. Specifically, I want to voice my support for the Ave. 21/Gordon Shaw alignment (see drawings enclosed) and ask that the Authority select this alignment.

The Gordon Shaw HMF site was studied extensively for over two years and certified by the CHSRA. It was stated in the report that the site was the least expensive to develop and had the minimal impacts on the environment. In addition, the site, submitted by the County of Madera contained a letter by the owner of the property wherein the owner offered the site on any terms deemed acceptable by the CHSRA. The site was one of over 20 sites submitted from Atwater to Bakersfield and after environmental clearance, became one of 4 sites left of the original sites submitted. It is a preferred site.

The Ave. 21 alignment is least expensive alignment. It is the fastest performing alignment. It will be easier to construct. However, if the Ave. 23 alignment is chosen, there is a route that



405 N. I St., Suite A, Madera, CA 93637 • (559) 662-2002 • www.maderalandmark.com

237-42

serves the Gordon Shaw Site (see enclosed). The drawings attached were done by Precision Engineering of Fresno California, who has done extensive work for the CHSRA.

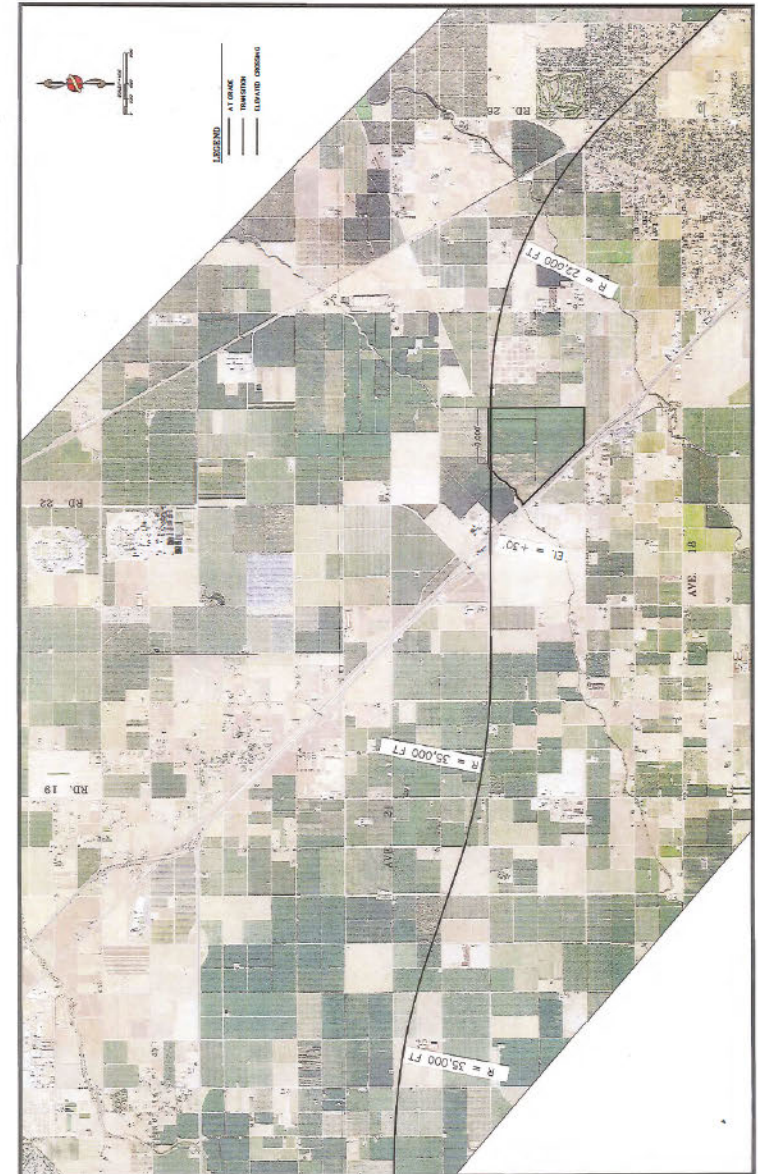
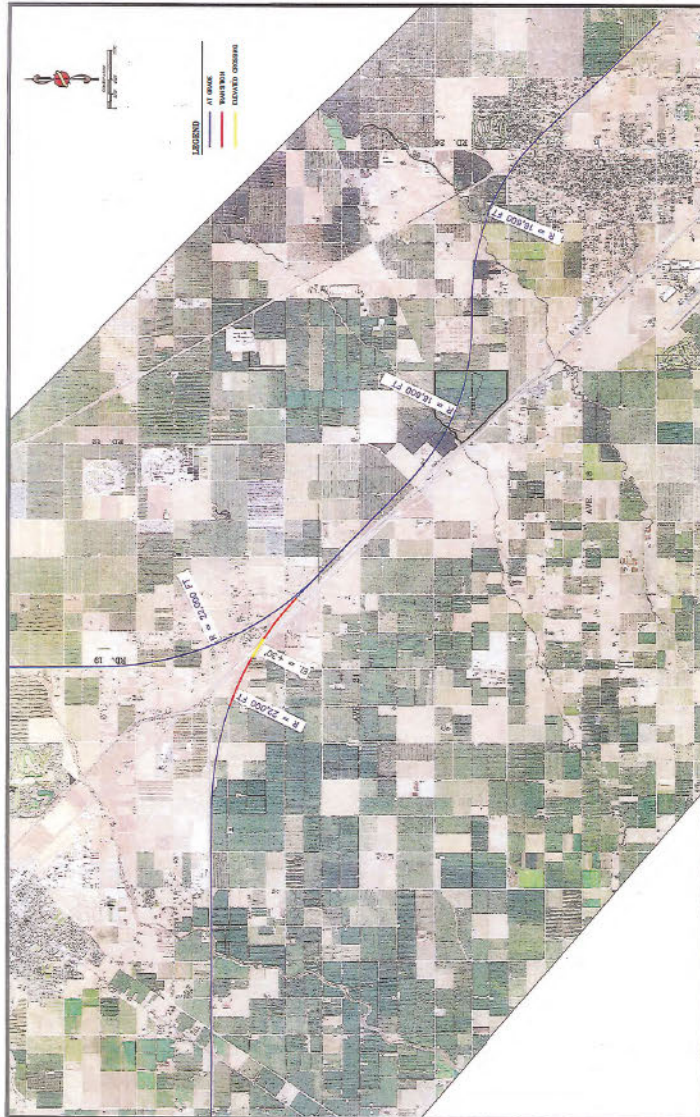
I ask that the CHSRA select the Ave. 21 and Ave. 23 alignments that serve the Gordon Shaw Properties HMF site. This resolution would not in any way threaten any other HMF sites under consideration in Madera County: it best meets the needs of the project and would keep a high quality site chosen as a finalist by the CHSRA in contention for selection.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Edward J. McIntyre
Gordon Shaw Properties Representative
405 North I St. Ste. A
Madera CA 93637
559-662-2002 office
559-706-2250 cell
LREMadera@gmail.com

Submission 237 (Ed McIntyre, Landmark Real Estate, June 18, 2019) - Continued



Response to Submission 237 (Ed McIntyre, Landmark Real Estate, June 18, 2019)

237-42

Please refer to Standard Response CVY-Response-GENERAL-4: Heavy Maintenance Facility.