



OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA MERCED  
OFFICE OF THE CHANCELLOR  
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March 5, 2021

Brian P. Kelly  
CEO  
California High-Speed Rail Authority  
770 L Street, Suite 620  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**RE: City of Merced Support for the California High-Speed Rail Authority  
Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan**

Dear Mr Kelly:

The University of California, Merced joins with the City of Merced in fully endorsing Governor Gavin Newsom's plan for high-speed rail in the Central Valley of California. Not only will this be an important economic development project for our often-overlooked region, it will also advance our shared commitment to reducing air pollutants here, where asthma and other respiratory illnesses are disproportionately present and medical facilities exceptionally limited.

The city's commitment includes continued strong support for the draft 2020 Business Plan for the high-speed rail project, which includes pursuing Merced-Fresno-Bakersfield Interim Service with stops at Kings/Tulare and Madera, providing electrified, high-speed rail service to Californians at the earliest possible time.

Merced, Fresno and Bakersfield are home to nearly one million Californians and the counties of Merced, Fresno and Kern have a population in excess of two million people. The cities in the Central Valley are among California's fastest growing communities, ripe with opportunity to carry California into a sustainable future.

UC Merced, with our particular focus on educating the young people of the Central Valley and focusing our research agenda on the challenges of this region, sees a particular value to high-speed connection from the central to the southern reaches of the Valley, for students, families, faculty and staff.

Governor Newsom's commitment and vision for high-speed rail is memorialized in the Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan with the inclusion of a Central Valley segment that cuts travel time in half between cities in the Valley compared to today's rail service or traveling by car. The plan



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frames a high-speed rail line that provides connections in Merced to the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) train service and the San Joaquin service to Oakland and Sacramento in the north and the Central Valley and Los Angeles in the south.

While the project is transformative for the Central Valley, it maintains important targeted investments adopted by the High-Speed Rail Authority in the Bay Area and Los Angeles. This is key to opening up Valley-to-Valley access to provide opportunities for companies to expand to the Central Valley and offering affordable housing prospects that align with the governor's overall goals to ensure statewide coordinated investments.

High-speed rail also connects Merced and the Central Valley to the megaregion efforts from the Bay Area — enhancing a regional perspective on how we address housing, workforce and educational issues. This includes leveraging state investments in dynamic institutions such as UC Merced.

UC Merced remains supportive of high-speed rail and looks forward to a continued partnership in doing its part to provide solutions to California's long-term challenges.

Sincerely,

Juan Sánchez Muñoz, Ph.D.  
Chancellor

CC: Stephanie Dietz, Merced City Manager