

ATTACHMENT D: CEQA CERTIFICATION DRAFT RESOLUTION #HSRA 24-10

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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL RESOLUTION #HSRA 24-10

CEQA Certification of the Palmdale to Burbank 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 Palmdale to Burbank Project Section;

Whereas, the Authority and the FRA initially commenced preparation of a second-tier Palmdale to Los Angeles Project Section Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) in 2007 and subsequently split that section into two parts, leading to their commencing preparation of a Palmdale to Burbank 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 Project Scoping and multiple Alternatives Analysis reports to explore alignment alternatives from 2007 through to the selection of the SR14A alternative in 2020;

Whereas, on November 15, 2018, the Authority Board concurred with the staff recommendation to designate the Refined SR14 Alternative as the Authority’s Preferred Alternative for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section, as reflected in Resolution # HSRA 18-19;

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, the Authority refined the Preferred Alternative for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section to the SR14A Alternative in August of 2020, as reflected in the minutes of the Authority Board of August 13, 2020;

Whereas, in its role as CEQA and NEPA lead agency, the Authority circulated the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (“Draft EIR/EIS”) for a public review and comment period from September 2, 2022, to November 1, 2022, which designated the SR14A Alternative as the Authority’s Preferred Alternative and the CEQA Proposed Project;

Whereas, the Authority extended the public review for the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Draft EIR/EIS for an additional 30 days, to December 1, 2022;

Whereas, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Draft EIR/EIS studied the Preferred Alternative in two subsections: the Central Subsection extending from Spruce Court in the City of Palmdale to Lockheed Drive; and the Burbank Subsection extending from Lockheed Drive to north of Winona Avenue in the City of Burbank;

Whereas, the Authority determined it was appropriate to complete the review of these two Subsections in the Palmdale to Burbank 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 May 24, 2024, the Authority issued a Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS and made it publicly available on the Authority website and provided broad public notice thereof;

Whereas, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS explains that the Authority previously approved the Burbank Airport Station and related infrastructure (referred to in the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS as the Burbank Subsection) as part of the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section approvals in 2022; and,

Whereas, the Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS updates the Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section’s approved analysis on the Burbank Subsection to reflect Authority responses to comments received on this area during the Palmdale to Burbank Draft EIR/EIS comment period and reaffirms the Burbank to Los Angeles Final EIR/EIS approvals, as the design for the Burbank Subsection remains unchanged and as the Burbank to Los Angeles Final EIR/EIS conclusions remain consistent with the Palmdale to Burbank Final EIR/EIS conclusions for the Burbank Subsection.

Therefore, it is resolved:

The Authority hereby certifies that:

- a. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS has been completed in compliance with CEQA;
- b. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS has been presented to the Authority Board as the decision-making body for the Palmdale to Burbank 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 Palmdale to Burbank Project Section; and
- c. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section Final EIR/EIS reflects the Authority’s independent judgment and analysis.

Vote:

Yes:

No:

Absent:

Date:

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