

RESOLUTION #HSRA 18-18

Staff Recommended State's Preferred Alternative for the Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) has conducted preliminary engineering and environmental analysis to a level sufficient to describe the comparative differences among the Build Alternatives (Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 5) for the Bakersfield to Palmdale Project Section;

Whereas, the Authority has developed a design option (known as the "CCNM Design Option") to minimize noise and visual effects to the César Chávez National Monument;

Whereas, the Authority has briefed the regulatory agencies and conducted stakeholder working groups and open houses in Edison, Tehachapi, Rosamond, Lancaster, and Palmdale to seek input, which was carefully considered;

Whereas, the analyses indicate that Alternative 2 with the CCNM Design Option strikes the best balance among project alternatives by meeting project objectives while also incorporating stakeholder input and minimizing effects to environmental and community resources;

Whereas, the Board has delegated to staff the authority to develop the Draft EIR/EIS;

Whereas, the Board has retained authority to identify a preferred alternative in the Draft EIR/EIS;

Whereas, staff has identified the public transparency benefits of sharing the analysis that has been conducted to this point, and of identifying the State's Preferred Alternative in the forthcoming Bakersfield to Palmdale Draft EIR/EIS;

Whereas, the identification of the State's Preferred Alternative at this time is not a final decision by the Board and allows for full consideration of all the effects of the alternatives considered in the still-ongoing environmental process, and,

Whereas, the Authority recognizes the function of the forthcoming Bakersfield to Palmdale Draft EIR/EIS is to elicit public comments prior to the Authority making any final decision.

Therefore, it is resolved:

The Authority Board concurs with the staff recommendation that Alternative 2 with the CCNM Design Option shall be identified as the State's Preferred Alternative in the forthcoming Bakersfield to Palmdale Draft EIR/EIS. The Authority finds that identifying a preferred alternative will facilitate more informed public comments on the Draft EIR/EIS.

The Authority Board directs staff to work with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to obtain FRA's concurrence that Alternative 2 with the CCNM Design Option is the FRA's NEPA Preferred Alternative.

The Authority Board further directs staff to continue to engage local stakeholders to address concerns about high-speed rail within their communities. The Board also directs staff to continue to consult and collaborate with the César Chávez Foundation, and other consulting parties, regarding the CCNM Design Option.

Vote:
Yes:
No:
Absent:
Date:

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