

April 2, 2020

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

Chair Mendonca and Board Members:

After reviewing the 2020 California High Speed Rail Business Plan and the proposed Interim Operating Plan, the *Rail Passengers Association* (RPA), its President, and its Southwest Division Council Representatives representing 9,000 RPA members in California, recommend the Board adopt both the 2020 Business Plan and proposed Interim Operating Plan at its April Board Meeting. The RPA Southwest Division compliments CHSRA on its continued focus on delivering a broad, integrated California transportation network with high-speed rail service as its core link.

The RPA Southwest Division also applauds the proposed network's statewide reach and the increase in frequencies that will make rail more competitive with the automobile. The improved and expanded ACE/San Joaquin/HSR network will reach all of California and generate substantial synergies beyond the current individual systems. This network also creates the most financially viable option for increased service, reducing the required operating subsidy compared with the current standalone ACE and San Joaquin services.

In addition, the Interim Operating Plan brings true high-speed service to California sooner than any alternative option. It also demonstrates the potential of high-speed rail while facilitating early testing of equipment and operating systems, speeding future service expansion as new segments are built. Finally, the construction and operation of high-speed rail Merced to Bakersfield will greatly benefit communities and cities in the San Joaquin Valley, allowing them to move forward on re-visioning themselves as city center-focused transit-oriented cityscapes.

Founded in 1967, *Rail Passengers* is the oldest and largest national organization speaking for the more than 40 million rail passengers in the U.S., with members throughout the U.S. including California. RPA strongly supports an expanded comprehensive public transportation network connecting cities in California as well as the nation as a whole. RPA members are volunteers who work for improved rail passenger service.

Respectfully submitted,



Jim Mathews, President and CEO Rail Passengers Association
George Chilson, Chairman Emeritus, Director, Southwest Division, RPA
Steve Roberts, Northern California Council Representative, RPA
Doug Kerr, Northern California Council Representative, RPA
Vaughn Wolfe, RPA Member

cc: Brian Kelly, CEO California High-Speed Rail Authority
Stacey Mortensen, Executive Director San Joaquin Regional Rail Authority
Dan Levitt, Manager of Regional Initiatives San Joaquin Regional Rail Authority