

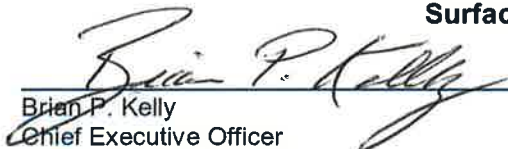
CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL PROJECT

DRAFT Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye

Pursuant to:
California Environmental Quality Act, P.R.C. 21000 et seq.; State of California CEQA Guidelines,
California Administrative Code, 15000 et seq.; and National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332 et
seq.) 40 C.F.R. Part 1500 and 64 Fed. Reg. 28545

Prepared by the
California High-Speed Rail Authority
and the
Federal Railroad Administration

With Cooperating Agencies:
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
U.S. Bureau of Reclamation
Surface Transportation Board



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Abstract: This *California High-Speed Rail, Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS* (Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS) considers, describes, and summarizes the environmental impacts of a portion of the Merced to Fresno Section project—the Central Valley Wye, an approximately 51- to 55-mile portion of the larger 800-mile California High-Speed Rail system planned throughout California. The high-speed rail system will connect the major population centers of Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange County, and San Diego. As part of the Merced to Fresno Section of the statewide high-speed rail system, the Central Valley Wye would create the east-west high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east. This Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is a supplement to the Merced to Fresno Section: Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). The Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS identified the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative, for the north/south alignment of the high-speed rail, but did not select a preferred alternative for the Central Valley Wye. The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) Board of Directors certified the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) on May 3, 2012, and filed a Notice of Determination on May 4, 2012. The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued a record of decision (ROD) on September 18, 2012,

and the Surface Transportation Board issued a ROD on June 13, 2013. Although the Authority Board of Directors and FRA approved portions of the Hybrid Alternative outside the wye for the north/south alignment of the high-speed rail and the Downtown Merced and Downtown Fresno Mariposa Street station locations, these approvals, deferred a decision on the area known as the “wye connection”, that is, the east-west high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east, to allow for additional environmental analysis, which is the intent of this document.

The need for the HSR system exists statewide, with specific attributes of regional areas contributing to this need. The Merced to Fresno Section is an essential component of the statewide HSR system and directly relates to the population growth and increased intercity travel demand over the next 20 years and beyond and the increased travel delays and congestion that would result on California’s highways and at its airports. Four alternatives are considered in this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS: the State Route (SR) 152 (North) to Road 13 Wye; the SR 152 (North) to Road 19 Wye; the Avenue 21 to Road 13 Wye; and the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye. The Authority and FRA have identified the Preferred Alternative (CEQA Proposed Project) in this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS as the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative. The Authority and FRA will incorporate into the design of each Central Valley Wye alternative impact avoidance and minimization features (IAMF): standard practices, actions, and design features. Potential environmental impacts of the alternatives include air pollutant emissions; increases in noise and vibration; displacement of commercial, residential, and agricultural properties; community and neighborhood disruption; impacts on historic and archaeological sites; visual impacts; impacts on sensitive biological resources and wetlands; and cumulative impacts. Mitigation measures have been developed to avoid or reduce significant impacts identified in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.

This Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is being made available to the public in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Visit the California High-Speed Rail Authority [website](#), where you can:

- View and download the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.
- Request a compact disc (CD) of the Supplemental EIR/EIS.
- Find a location near you to review a copy of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.

Printed and electronic copies (CDs) have been placed in the main public libraries and/or other locations in the following cities and communities: Madera, Merced, Chowchilla, and Fresno. Printed and electronic copies of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, along with electronic copies of the associated technical reports, and the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS, also are available for review during business hours at the California High-Speed Rail Authority’s office in Sacramento and Fresno.

Additional Information

As permitted under the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program, the State of California has requested that the FRA assign its responsibilities under NEPA and related federal environmental laws to the Authority. The program is authorized by 23 U.S.C. section 327 to be implemented by the Federal Highway Administration, FRA, and the Federal Transit Administration through joint regulations defining project and applicant eligibility, the application requirements, and the requirements for a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approving the assignment.

The Authority, in partnership with the California State Transportation Agency, made available for public review and comment a draft application to the FRA to assume federal environmental responsibilities under the NEPA. The official comment period on the draft application began Thursday, November 9, 2017, and ended Monday, December 11, 2017. Public comments received during this period were reviewed and considered prior to submitting the final application to the FRA in February 2018. The FRA published the final application and draft MOU in the Federal Register on Wednesday, May 2, 2018, and solicited public comment for 30 days, which ended June 1, 2018. The final application and MOU can be viewed on the California High-Speed Rail Authority website at:

http://www.hsr.ca.gov/Programs/Environmental_Planning/nepa_assignment.html. These comment periods do not substitute for, or duplicate, the comment period for this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS.

The FRA remains the lead agency under NEPA for this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS until the application process is complete and FRA has signed the MOU. If FRA signs the MOU and does so prior to the ROD for this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, the Authority would issue the ROD and finalize any related environmental reviews in lieu of FRA.