

Submission 810 (Diana Davis, October 13, 2011)

Comment Period Extended to
October 13, 2011

RECEIVED
10-13-11P04:34 RCVD

está prolongado hasta del
13 de octubre de 2011

 CALIFORNIA High-Speed Rail Authority

Comment Card
Tarjeta de Comentarios

Merced to Fresno High-Speed Train Section
Draft Environmental Impact Report/
Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) –
Public Hearings
September 2011

Tren de Alta Velocidad Sección Merced a Fresno
Anteproyecto del Informe de Impacto
Medioambiental/Declaración de Impacto
Medioambiental (EIR/EIS) - Audiencias Públicas
Septiembre 2011

Please submit your completed comment card at the end of the meeting, or mail to:

Por favor entregue su tarjeta al final de la reunión, o envíela a una de las siguientes direcciones:

Merced to Fresno HST Environmental Review, 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814

The comment period on the Draft EIR/EIS begins August 15, 2011 and ends September 28, 2011. Comments received after 5:00 p.m. on September 28, 2011 will not be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS.

El período a hacer comentarios empieza a 15 de agosto y termina a 28 de septiembre. Comentarios recibidos después de 5:00 p.m. a 28 de septiembre no se responderá en el EIR/EIS final.

Name/
Nombre: DIANA DAVIS Organization/
Organización:

(Optional/Opcional)
Address/Domicilio: 28379 SALT LAKE DR Phone Number/
Número de teléfono: 539-665-2241

City, State, Zip code/
Ciudad, estado, código postal: CHOWCHILLA, CA, 93610 Email address/
Correo electrónico: NONE

Up AS Country People live in the
Country for reasons such as
privacy, peace and quiet and no
Hussle and Bussel.

810-1

The High speed rail will only cause
a lot of extra noise and take away
some farm land that feed the people
without land for crops there will be no
food in stores.

Please take the rail when there is
already Hussle and Bussel. Thank You

Diana Davis

Response to Submission 810 (Diana Davis, October 13, 2011)

810-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14.

Submission 467 (Marvin Dean, October 3, 2011)

Date: September 30, 2011

10-03-11A08:34 RCVD

California High Speed Rail Authority
C/o: Rachel Wall
Cc: Chris Ryan

From: Marvin Dean
SJV Region

Re: My EIR/EIS Public Comment
& FRA DOT Complaint Number: 2011-0065

467-1

I wanted to confirm HSR receive my written;
Comment concerning environmental justice communities; low-income & minority resident
And small / micro business owner that may be effected by the projects,

*** Mitigation Recommend:**

- HSR set local project hiring goal for women & minority construction jobs
- HSR assistance with removal barrier that prevent SBE/DBE/DVBE
From working on HSR project;
- > Training both workers & business owners
- > Owner bonding & Insurance program

My team & I would like to offer our help HSR with FRA require action

Other area where our team can help (One Stop Resource)

SBE/DVBE/DBE contractors compliance, getting sub contractors ready & able to bid HSR
project; Environmental Justice Communities outreach past 30+ years develop networking
coalition with SBE/DVBE/DBE/UDBE/MBE/WBE trade association & minority chamber of
commerce, community organization, prime contractors trade group union & non union within San
Joaquin Valley and Statewide.

My contact # 661-747-1465

Response to Submission 467 (Marvin Dean, October 3, 2011)

467-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-19.

Submission 187 (Richard DeBush, September 14, 2011)

HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMENT SHEET

Please complete and mail this sheet to the following address:
Attention: Supervisor John Pedrozo
County of Merced
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

Board of Supervisors
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

1
139

NAME Richard De Bush
First Last
ADDRESS 12926 Le Grand Rd Le Grand 95333
Street Address Town/City Zip Code

|||||
DISTRICT 1 RESIDENT
12926 LE GRAND RD
LE GRAND CA 95333-9788

MAILING ADDRESS _____
(IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE) Address Town/City Zip Code

TELEPHONE NUMBER (209) 389 4730

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Please check here if you would like me to notify you via email or mail of upcoming High Speed Rail public hearings or meetings for the next 12 months.

187-1

Please check all that are applicable.

- I STRONGLY SUPPORT THE A-2 HIGH SPEED RAIL ROUTE ALTERNATIVE (UNION PACIFIC RAIL ROAD/HIGHWAY 99) AND AM AGAINST THE A-1 ROUTE ALTERNATIVE.
- I SUPPORT THE A-2 ROUTE BECAUSE IT'S CLOSEST TO A MAJOR TRANSPORTION CORRIDOR.
- I SUPPORT THE A-2 ROUTE BECAUSE IT WOULD LEAST IMPACT FARMLAND AND HABITAT AREAS.
- I AM AGAINST THE A-1 ROUTE BECAUSE IT MOST NEGATIVELY AFFECTS THE COMMUNITY I LIVE IN.

Please provide any additional reasons or comment as to why you support an A-2 route.

Please note that your comments provided on this sheet will be forwarded to the California High Speed Rail Authority for their public comment records.

Response to Submission 187 (Richard DeBush, September 14, 2011)

187-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10. Also see Chapter 7 Preferred Alternative of the EIR/EIS which summarizes the relative differences between the alternatives and identifies the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative for the Merced to Fresno Section.

Submission 957 (Edgar DeJager, October 26, 2011)

Merced - Fresno - RECORD #957 DETAIL
Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 10/26/2011
Response Requested :
Stakeholder Type : CA Resident
Submission Date : 10/26/2011
Submission Method : Project Email
First Name : Edgar
Last Name : DeJager
Professional Title :
Business/Organization :
Address :
Apt./Suite No. :
City :
State : CA
Zip Code : 0000
Telephone :
Email : ddj2x@aol.com
Cell Phone :
Email Subscription :
Add to Mailing List :
Stakeholder Comments/Issues : New submission. Thank you!

957-1

-----Original Message-----
From: Edgar De Jager [mailto:ddj2x@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, August 16, 2011 9:36 PM
To: Jeff Abercrombie
Cc: Kole Upton
Subject: HSR Yard " De Jager - Harris "

Mr. Abercrombie, my name is Edgar De Jager. You have me as a contact for the "De jager - Harris" rail yard. I am formally withdrawing ALL De Jager properties from any consideration for the maint. yard. We do not want anything to do with this yard. We have taken a strong position AGAINST the whole HSR idea. Please confirm that you have received this Message. Thank-you for your time. Edgar De Jager

NOTICE: This communication and any attachments ("this message") may contain confidential information for the sole use of the intended recipient(s). Any unauthorized use, disclosure, viewing, copying, alteration, dissemination or distribution of, or reliance on this message is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, or you are not an authorized recipient, please notify the sender immediately by replying to this message, delete this message and all copies from your e-mail system and destroy any printed copies.

EIR/EIS Comment :

Yes

Response to Submission 957 (Edgar DeJager, October 26, 2011)

957-1

Yes, the High-Speed Rail Authority has received your correspondence regarding the status of your interest in participating in solicitation of the Heavy Maintenance Facility. The EIR/EIS began the review of this location prior to your retraction. For this reason, the site will continue to be considered for administrative purposes. Your retraction will be included in the array of considerations in selecting the heavy maintenance facility for the High-Speed Rail project.

Submission 197 (Steve and Sandy Del Real, September 14, 2011)

HIGH SPEED RAIL COMMENT SHEET

Please complete and mail this sheet to the following address:

Attention: Supervisor John Pedrozo
County of Merced
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

Board of Supervisors
2222 M Street
Merced, CA 95340

1
362

NAME Steve and Sandy Del Real
ADDRESS 4755 Fresno Rd. Le Grand CA 95333

DISTRICT 1 RESIDENT
4755 FRESNO RD
LE GRAND CA 95333-9692

MAILING ADDRESS (IF DIFFERENT FROM ABOVE) Address Town/City Zip Code

TELEPHONE NUMBER (209) 389-0321

EMAIL ADDRESS del4sum@elite.net

Please check here if you would like me to notify you via email or mail of upcoming High Speed Rail public hearings or meetings for the next 12 months.

Please check all that are applicable.

- I STRONGLY SUPPORT THE A-2 HIGH SPEED RAIL ROUTE ALTERNATIVE (UNION PACIFIC RAIL ROAD/HIGHWAY 99) AND AM AGAINST THE A-1 ROUTE ALTERNATIVE.
- I SUPPORT THE A-2 ROUTE BECAUSE IT'S CLOSEST TO A MAJOR TRANSPORTION CORRIDOR.
- I SUPPORT THE A-2 ROUTE BECAUSE IT WOULD LEAST IMPACT FARMLAND AND HABITAT AREAS.
- I AM AGAINST THE A-1 ROUTE BECAUSE IT MOST NEGATIVELY AFFECTS THE COMMUNITY I LIVE IN.

Please provide any additional reasons or comment as to why you support an A-2 route.

First of all we don't support either.
CALIFORNIA IS BROKE! We don't
need high speed rail. In support
of A-2 we don't want noise
pollution in Le Grand. Lastly,
we are already raping the valuable
farmland leave Le Grand Alone!

Please note that your comments provided on this sheet will be forwarded to the California High Speed Rail Authority for their public comment records.

197-1

Response to Submission 197 (Steve and Sandy Del Real, September 14, 2011)

197-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10. Also see Chapter 7 Preferred Alternative of the EIR/EIS which summarizes the relative differences between the alternatives and identifies the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative for the Merced to Fresno Section.

Submission 936 (Leonard G. Dias, October 13, 2011)

Joseph Szabo, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Szabo,

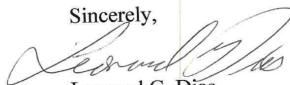
936-1

I am requesting that the high speed rail authority please give a 90 day review period for the Eir document. This project will be affecting the lives of Kings county residents for generations to come. Given that our residents that will be affected the most by the high speed rail are farmers and dairymen, the 45 day period does not give ample time for them to review and respond with their impacts. Right now is one of the busiest times in the lives of farmers.

Please show that you really are interested in doing this process the correct and fair way for everyone and that you are not just going through the motions to rush this through. This is a very complicated document with a lot of information to go through, for a very expensive project. A 90 day review period will allow those of us who are going to be impacted a chance to go it over in detail.

A project of this magnitude will change the environment and landscape of Kings County forever! A 90 day review period is not asking too much.

Sincerely,



Leonard G. Dias
9380 7th ave
Hanford, Ca. 93230

2011 AUG 29 AM 11:24
OFFICE OF ADMINISTRATOR
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ADVISORS/INVESTIGATOR



Response to Submission 936 (Leonard G. Dias, October 13, 2011)

936-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-7.

Submission 76 (Janie Doak, August 31, 2011)

Merced - Fresno - RECORD #76 DETAIL

Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 8/31/2011
Response Requested :
Stakeholder Type : CA Resident
Submission Date : 8/31/2011
Submission Method : Project Email
First Name : Janie
Last Name : Doak
Professional Title :
Business/Organization :
Address :
Apt./Suite No. :
City :
State : CA
Zip Code : 95814
Telephone :
Email : jurkdoak@unwiredbb.com
Cell Phone :
Email Subscription :
Add to Mailing List :

Stakeholder
Comments/Issues :

RE: High Speed Rail; Merced to Fresno Proposed Route; N. Golden State Blvd from Herndon south to Ashlan Avenue.

Recently the EIR was released for this portion of the route. It shows the proposed route wiping out numerous businesses along Golden State Blvd. The area I am most familiar with is from Barstow Ave going north. It encompasses Orr Safety, T-Mobile, Commercial Neon, JI Garcia, Trane, JR Lawson Trucking, Dakovich & Son, and other industrial distribution tenants. It also affects the Ashlan business park development further south, which has even more commercial and industrial businesses.

76-1

This is a very poor choice for the location of the HSR in my opinion. To move this number of businesses and demo the buildings would foolishly add millions to the cost of HSR. The end result/cost to our local economy to relocate this number of businesses would be devastating. Some businesses would likely close, many employees would lose their jobs, and the debt the business owners would incur could put them out of business. Most of the buildings are owner-occupied and were not only well-built to last, but specific to their uses. It would be difficult to impossible to find suitable comparable properties. Yes, commercial building costs are low currently, but not all buildings fit all users. That's why these companies built their own buildings over 10 years ago. Some of the buildings are owned by investors (like me) who provided a much-needed product (warehouse space with docks, close to major freeway). These are nice, well-built buildings as opposed to cookie cutter, low cost metal buildings. They were built with an eye towards the future both to help the local economy and to provide a reasonable return on investment to the owners. In today's market, IF an alternate location was found, YOU COULD NOT REBUILD and still turn a profit at today's rental rates. This would be devastating! Other properties DO NOT meet the same needs, that is why they are vacant and these buildings have low vacancy rates; so it is not a matter of just buying another building and going on with business. A reasonable alternative seems to be to relocate the low cost housing neighbors between Highway 99 and Golden State Blvd (West of GS); and maybe even going on the west side of highway 99. Please look into our concerns and consider an alternative route. Thank you.

76-2

Janie Jurkovich Doak
Cell-559-260-2721

Submission 76 (Janie Doak, August 31, 2011) - Continued

EIR/EIS Comment : Yes

Response to Submission 76 (Janie Doak, August 31, 2011)

76-1

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-1.

76-2

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-7.

Submission 103 (Chuck Dolan, September 14, 2011)

Merced - Fresno - RECORD #103 DETAIL

Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 9/14/2011
Response Requested :
Stakeholder Type : CA Resident
Submission Date : 9/14/2011
Submission Method : Website
First Name : Chuck
Last Name : Dolan
Professional Title : Mr. D
Business/Organization : Retired
Address :
Apt./Suite No. :
City : Squaw Valley
State : CA
Zip Code : 93675
Telephone : 559 338-2635
Email : cdbjdolan@gmail.com
Cell Phone :
Email Subscription : All Sections
Add to Mailing List : Yes
Stakeholder
Comments/Issues :
EIR/EIS Comment : Yes

103-1

How many people to ride, at what cost? Will project be subsidised with tax payers money? To my thinking one incedent to stop the train will reduce your estimtions on number of people traveling on High Speed Rail. And I do belive the High Speed Rail will not make money or pay for project. Tax payers on the hook again. Also, people are not working, saving their money and seting tight. Most of the money spent will be on foreign labor mfg. costs and products. Post were all the money will go. This is not the time to spend money, it is time to stop spending.

Response to Submission 103 (Chuck Dolan, September 14, 2011)

103-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14, MF-Response-S&S-4, and MF-Response-GENERAL-18.

Submission 615 (Michael Dwyer, October 13, 2011)

Merced - Fresno - RECORD #615 DETAIL

Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 10/13/2011
Response Requested :
Stakeholder Type : CA Resident
Submission Date : 10/13/2011
Submission Method : Website
First Name : Michael
Last Name : Dwyer
Professional Title : property owner and resident
Business/Organization :
Address :
Apt./Suite No. :
City : Merced
State : CA
Zip Code : 95341
Telephone : 209 722-1268
Email : dwyersiv@aol.com
Cell Phone :
Email Subscription : Merced - Fresno
Add to Mailing List : Yes
Stakeholder
Comments/Issues :
EIR/EIS Comment : Yes

615-1

If this project has to happen, contain it on the west side of the railroad tracks where it would not impact so many homes and farmlands. once the land is gone, it cannot be replaced. I believe building this high speed rail is a mistake. we had more efficient rail and transportation systems up until the 1950's. we destroyed those systems in exchange for private modes of transportation. I do not support this impractical, costly, and destructive plan.

Response to Submission 615 (Michael Dwyer, October 13, 2011)

615-1

See MF-Response-General-2, MF-Response-General-10, and MF-Response-General-14.

Submission 620 (Michael Fincher, October 13, 2011)

Merced - Fresno - RECORD #620 DETAIL

Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 10/13/2011
Response Requested :
Stakeholder Type : CA Resident
Submission Date : 10/13/2011
Submission Method : Website
First Name : Michael
Last Name : Fincher
Professional Title : Mr
Business/Organization :
Address :
Apt./Suite No. :
City : Atwater
State : CA
Zip Code : 95301
Telephone :
Email : mfincher@ucmerced.edu
Cell Phone :
Email Subscription : Merced - Fresno
Add to Mailing List : Yes

620-1
620-2
620-3
620-4
620-5
620-6
620-7
620-8
620-9
620-10
620-11

Stakeholder Comments/Issues :

Geology/Soils
 Issue of displacement of soil for grading the land for the HSR tracks. Were environmental considerations made for transportation and removal of dirt and topsoil made for this process? Where will the dirt be coming from, and how will individual properties be affected, especially those located in flood plains?
 Geology and soils, as well as Noise and Vibration
 Seismic vibrations- what will be the impact on surrounding soil and/or water tables. Will root systems of tree crops be affected by the vibrations caused by the HSR trains running? How far out will the vibrations reach, and what are their strengths.
 How will underpasses or overpasses be made? Will there be consideration for large farm equipment and implements? If not, there needs to be, as the points for crossing the track are extremely limited, and farm vehicle use is crucial for the ag. industry. For areas on roads and highways, is the HSR authority responsible for widening the highways and roads for travel of ag vehicles to crossing points? What are the environmental impacts of such special Slow Moving Vehicle and extra wide lanes? What will be the impact on construction and use? Also, what is the overall impact on air quality due to extra length of operation to crossing points? This is crucial as central valley residents pay air quality board fees, while the remainder of the state does not.
 If an electric track/system is implemented, what will be the EMF impact on adjacent and nearby power lines? Will there be interference with cell towers as well? Also, current research has disclosed residents near power lines, which emit EMF's, have an increased risk of cancer. What will be the impact of EMF's emitted from the ground, and is there any research that the HSR authority has commissioned on this issue. Due to the high speed nature of the train, there is bound to be temporary shifts in air, which will cause disturbances to local wildlife. Coupled with an EMF effect, what will be the impact on migratory birds travelling through the central valley on the Pacific flyway? How much riparian habitat will be destroyed or compromised from HSR construction and use?
 Where will the energy/electricity come from to run the rail system. Clearly our state cannot support increased burdens on our infrastructure, due to brown outs and possible blackouts. Was there consideration of the impact of further energy consumption and costs? How much total electricity will be lost over the course of the track?
 Transportation and Traffic
 What will be EMS response capability to responding to HSR emergencies? Will EMS vehicles be able to easily access tracks by a side road running directly parallel to the track? How will the HSR authority deal with possible wrecks and contaminants from the train system to local soil/water tables?
 What will be the local impact on school district's bus routes? They will have to re-route for crossing points, increasing pollution and fuel consumption, which will also raise costs.
 What will be the impact of County revenue and commerce? If more people are travelling out of rural counties, what will the impact be on local business?

EIR/EIS Comment :

Yes

Response to Submission 620 (Michael Fincher, October 13, 2011)

620-1

Excess excavated material would be removed and hauled to a permitted disposal site. Truck hauling would require a loading area, staging space for trucks awaiting loading, and provisions to prevent soil from being tracked on public streets. Tarps would be placed over loads to prevent dust generation and spillage during transport. Truck haul routes would be consistent with the requirements of local jurisdictions. See also MF-Response-PUE-2.

It is anticipated that cut and fill would be procured within the project area to the extent possible, although some material (e.g., aggregate) would be imported. For the purposes of the EIR/EIS analysis, quarries in Southern California have been identified as the assumed source of aggregate (see section 3.9.1 of the EIR/EIS). There are no plans to use local properties, especially those located in floodplains, to meet borrow requirements.

620-2

See MF-Response-NOISE-5.

620-3

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-1.

Grade separations are designed using the recommended maximum grade of 4%. These grades would work for farm equipment/truck traffic.

620-4

See MF-Response-AQ-4.

620-5

The EMF produced by the HST has been modeled and will largely be confined to the HST right of way within the fences. Power lines outside of the right of way will mainly be near the HST where these transmission lines bring power to the HST at the traction power substations. Therefore the main impact of the HST on nearby power lines will be to act as a load on the California electrical system that causes power to flow in these adjacent lines to the HST traction power substations. The HST will not cause any interference with these nearby power lines. The only possibility of interference with cell

620-5

phone towers will be high frequency signal transmissions from the HST communication and control systems. The possibility of electromagnetic interference (EMI) produced by the HST was evaluated for its impact on nearby radio and TV broadcast and cell phone antennas. No interference is expected.

With regard to the possibility of residents living near power lines having a higher incidence rate of cancer, some studies have suggested this. Many other similar studies have not found this elevated incidence rate of cancer. To date no biological linkage has been demonstrated between exposure to power line EMF and the occurrence of cancer or other disease. This despite the conduct of many thousands of scientific studies worldwide. The impact of EMF from the ground would be coming from the earth's natural electric and magnetic fields which would occur with or without the construction and operation of the HST. The HSR Authority has not commissioned any new scientific research on this issue of the health effects of EMF.

620-6

See MF-Response-Bio-2 and MF-Response-Bio-3. Birds that migrate long distances are well adapted to rapidly shifting air columns such as thermal uprisings and wind gusts (USFWS 1998). Winds generated by the operation of the HST will not impact the movement of birds within the regional landscape as birds migrating through the project area will focus their routes at higher elevations and along topographical features within the landscape (ridgelines, large watercourses) that will maximize the energy potential of their internal fat stores (USFWS 1998). Potential collisions between migratory birds such as Canadian geese and the High Speed Rail will be minimized through the implementation of physical and spatial barriers along the HST Merced to Fresno Section. Physical barriers include security fencing and other devices (mesh netting, wires etc.) that will place a division between the HST corridor and the surrounding landscape. Spatial barriers are planning tools identified during preconstruction surveys that that will minimize wildlife interactions through land use planning, shifts in activities, and mitigation. The integration of physical and spatial barriers within the Merced to Fresno HST Section during the design build phase will minimize impacts to migrating wildlife species within the landscape.

Response to Submission 620 (Michael Fincher, October 13, 2011) - Continued

620-7

See MF-Response-BIO-2 and MF-Response-BIO-3.

620-8

See MF-Response-PUE-3 and MF-Response-PUE-4.

Energy loss during HST operation would be minimal. Energy use estimates conducted for the HST project assume 4% energy loss: 3% for transmission line losses and 1% for transformer losses (refer to Table 1 of Appendix 3.6-C Energy Usage Comparison).

620-9

See MF-Response-S&S-9.

Regarding hazardous material spills, the HST system would be dedicated to passenger transport and is not intended for the transport of freight or hazardous substances. The project would prepare and implement hazardous materials management plans, such as a California hazardous materials business plan and a spill prevention, containment, and countermeasures plan, to avoid occurrences and minimize the effects of hazardous materials spills and releases. Section 3.10, Hazardous Materials and Wastes, of the Final EIR/EIS provides further details.

620-10

See MF-Response-S&S-1.

620-11

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

Submission 297 (Darol Fishman, September 14, 2011)

August 12, 2011

297-1

John,

I voted "NO" on Proposition 1-A back in 2008. I don't support ANY high speed rail at this time for many reasons, none more important than the fact that any mass transit system, especially one to be built of this magnitude and scale, is unsustainable and will not pay for itself. We already have a high speed rail known as Amtrak that speeds through Le Grand/Planada/Merced at 75 miles per hour and is subsidized by the federal government. A quote from an article on Downsizing the Federal Government from the CATO Institute states: "Amtrak has been providing second-rate train service for almost four decades, while consuming almost \$40 billion in federal subsidies. The system has never earned a profit and most of its routes lose money. Amtrak's on-time record is very poor, and the system as a whole only accounts for 0.1 percent of America's passenger travel.³ Another problem is that Amtrak's infrastructure is in bad shape. Most of the blame for Amtrak's woes should be pinned on Congress, which insists on supporting an extensive, nationwide system of passenger rail that doesn't make economic sense."

What's to make us believe the California High Speed Rail project won't be more of the same? I have enclosed a fact sheet from the website High Speed Boondoggle.com. for your reading pleasure. I have researched this project and nothing, *NOTHING*, I have read points to this as being good for my community, my (your) county, or my state. The only ones saying it will be good have been politicians and the CHSR Authority, which already appears to be a bloated bureaucracy and they aren't in charge of anything that carries people yet.

This entire project was sold to the people as a bill of goods citing everything from job creation to cleaning up the environment. Merced County approved the project in the election but our surrounding counties voted against it. It pulled at heart strings and made voters "feel good" about checking the "yes" box but in the end it too will not sustain itself and will become a monetary black hole. The funds would be better utilized on other projects such as freeway repair and other infrastructure projects that will benefit the entire population as opposed to the small percentage that will utilize the rail project.

When all is done and said and the CHSR bureaucracy is up and running at full tilt and all those involved get their cuts and payoffs, it will be an albatross around the necks of the taxpayers. Many of the taxpayers in this community feel the same hence the many signs along the roadways in the area. I do not support any of the aforementioned options.

Sincerely,



Darol Fishman

Response to Submission 297 (Darol Fishman, September 14, 2011)

297-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14.

Submission 376 (Elaine Fleeman, September 26, 2011)

09-26-11A08:43 RCVD

Jeffery Hardoin

From: E. Fleeman <efleemanvet@yahoo.com>
Sent: Friday, September 23, 2011 3:54 PM
To: HSR Info
Subject: High speed rail

Sirs and madams:

376-1

I urge you to reconsider the construction of the high speed rail (HSR), especially starting with the middle section first. The most pressing transportation needs are within the metropolitan areas. The rail should start at the ends, if it is built at all, with portions in the Orange County/ Los Angeles metro area and in the San Francisco Bay area first, as this would help to alleviate congestion and be the most likely routes to have high ridership.

I do not think that HSR through the Central Valley is at all viable. The newest cost estimates show that it is likely to cost \$66 billion dollars to connect the Orange County area to the San Francisco area via the Central Valley. There is simply no way that there will be enough ridership to pay for this project and right now California is up to its eyeballs in debt. We don't need anymore debt to pay off. We simply can not afford this project as it is currently planned.

If it is to be done at all it will have to be reduced in scope, at least for the time being, to the metropolitan areas. That might be feasible, but alternate forms of transportation in the metro areas might still be cheaper and it may well be a better use of money to repair and widen highways and freeways. We need to get the most "bang for the buck", so to speak, and I don't think that HSR will do that. The HSR may well become an albatross and weigh down the state's finances so that we don't have the money for other needed projects.

Please have an independent accountant use REALISTIC estimates for the construction costs and ridership estimates. Some of the estimates done to date are not realistic and this is bothersome, as it appears that the numbers are being finagled and cherry picked to come up with the desired outcome.

376-2

In addition, there is much farm land at risk from this project and California can not afford to damage one of its biggest industries and destroy the trust of farmers, who will feel that they are considered expendable by the state. Many people's livelihoods depend on their farms and ranches. The HSR threatens some of these families livelihoods and threatens to cut up land that has been in families for many years. Please also consider the impact of the HSR on these people's lives and have compassion on them. Please do not build the HSR through the Central Valley.

Elaine Fleeman
5201 Tamara Court
Bakersfield, CA 93308
(661) 588-1754
efleemanvet@yahoo.com

1

Response to Submission 376 (Elaine Fleeman, September 26, 2011)

376-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-14

376-2

See MF-Response-GENERAL-4.

Response to Submission 203 (Pablo Flores, September 14, 2011)

203-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-10 and MF-Response-S&S-4. Also see Chapter 7 Preferred Alternative of the EIR/EIS which summarizes the relative differences between the alternatives and identifies the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative for the Merced to Fresno Section.

Submission 405 (Pat and Sam Fortin and Curto, August 14, 2011)

Katie Lichy

From: Pat Fortin [lgr4280@sbcglobal.net]
Sent: Sunday, August 14, 2011 12:06 PM
To: Simmons, Zachary M SPK
Subject: California high speed rail

405-1 | We are voters, investors and homeowners in Le Grand, California and own property in other areas such as Madera/Santa Clara/Merced counties.
We are well traveled and we have seen and experienced first hand the benefit of hi speed travel in other countries. We believe that hi speed rails should have been put in place in the United States years ago. If hi speed rails are not put in place today costs will only rise and in the future taxpayers will have to pay even more than today for a service that is definitely needed and should have been done years and years ago.

So many of our neighbors are against this project that it is frightening to think that they may be able to stop progress from happening. Thus postponing the inevitable to a future, more costly date.

Pat Fortin
Sam Curto
4280 Ipsen Avenue
Le Grand, Ca. 95333

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Response to Submission 405 (Pat and Sam Fortin and Curto, August 14, 2011)

405-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-9.

Submission 672 (Juliana Fuerbringer, October 13, 2011)

Merced - Fresno - RECORD #672 DETAIL

Status : Action Pending
Record Date : 10/13/2011
Response Requested :
Stakeholder Type : CA Resident
Submission Date : 10/13/2011
Submission Method : Project Email
First Name : Juliana
Last Name : Fuerbringer
Professional Title :
Business/Organization :
Address :
Apt./Suite No. :
City :
State :
Zip Code : 00000
Telephone :
Email : julianafuer@gmail.com
Cell Phone :
Email Subscription : Merced - Fresno
Add to Mailing List :

Stakeholder
Comments/Issues :

To: California High-Speed Rail Authority
Merced to Fresno Draft EIR/EIS Comments
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, CA 95814

I am writing this letter based on my wish to make the environment, farmland and community living a top priority in planning a project like high-speed rail. I have lived in Burlingame CA for many years and am familiar with issues in our area. I have similar concerns regarding areas south of where I live, including the California Central Valley.

The Authority's current plan for the Merced to Fresno section of the proposed high-speed rail project would have truly negative impacts on California's natural environment, on the agricultural economy of the California Central Valley, and on local communities located within the Central Valley. I urge the Authority to "start over," addressing the impacts I identify in this letter, and the impacts that I know others will identify.. After reconfiguring the project to eliminate and mitigate the negative impacts of the current proposal, the Authority should then recirculate a redrafted EIR/EIS for public review and comment.

Please also be aware that the 60-day comment period the Authority has provided for review of the current EIR/EIS did not provide me, or the public generally, with an adequate time to review and comment, in the way that CEQA and NEPA require. If for no other reason, the lack of an adequate comment period should convince the Authority to redraft the EIR/EIS and recirculate it, to provide a legally adequate review period, and to permit the kind of public participation that both CEQA and NEPA demand.

I realize that the Authority faces federal funding deadlines, which treat this project as if it were a short-term "job stimulus" project, instead of the 100-year plus public infrastructure project that it actually is. This is regrettable; however, these artificially short federal deadlines do not eliminate the substantive and procedural requirements of both CEQA and NEPA.. Both the state and federal law require that the EIR/EIS be redrafted and recirculated.

I urge the Authority to insist on good information, and on full public participation and review. If California hopes to gain the benefits that may

672-1

Submission 672 (Juliana Fuerbringer, October 13, 2011) - Continued

672-1

flow from the creation of a functional high-speed rail system in the state, "quick" decisions are not the most important thing. The "right" decisions are what are needed most. The current EIR/EIS for the Merced to Fresno section of the proposed statewide project reveals that more time and analysis are needed, in order to make it possible for the state to make the right decisions about the proposed high-speed train project.

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Thank you for working with Californians to preserve our beautiful country. I will look forward to the Authority's response.

Very truly yours,

Juliana Fuerbringer

Juliana Fuerbringer
Yes

EIR/EIS Comment :

Response to Submission 672 (Juliana Fuerbringer, October 13, 2011)

672-1

See MF-Response-GENERAL-7 and MF-Response-GENERAL-1.

Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011)

Aaron Fukuda

7450 Mountain View Street, Hanford, California 93230
(559) 707-8928, afukuda77@gmail.com

RECEIVED

10-12-11P02:05 RCVD

October 12, 2011

California High-Speed Rail Authority
Fresno to Merced Draft EIR/EIS Comments
770 L Street, Suite 800
Sacramento, California 95814

Subject: Comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement for the Merced to Fresno Section of the California High-Speed Rail

To The California High-Speed Rail Authority:

My name is Aaron Fukuda and as a landowner who is impacted (not in the alignment, however fiscally impacted and professionally impacted) by the California High-Speed Rail Project, and the decisions made by the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) I have taken the opportunity to read the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement for the Merced to Fresno section (DEIR/DEIS) of the California High Speed Rail Project (CHSRP). I possess a Bachelors of Science degree with honors in Civil Engineering from California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo and a Masters of Public Administration with honors from California State University, Fresno. I am a registered Professional Civil Engineer in the State of California and specialize in water resources and public/municipal engineering. I have experience in design, construction and administration of various projects of various sizes. As a part of my professional career I have experience in the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA) through my involvement on local projects and the utilization of federal funding, therefore requiring the involvement of NEPA.

621-1

The Authority should also be warned that the proposed future 60-day review period is a very short and inappropriate time allowed to review such a significant document. The current DEIR/DEIS was released for public review on August 9, 2011 and all comments are due by October 13, 2011. This time provided to the public for review was 60-days, which given the approximate number of pages required to fully understand the project (approximately 30,000 pages) required a person to read 500 pages per day. It

621-1

should be noted that CEQA Section 15141. Page Limits, states that an EIR is typically less than 150 pages and projects with an unusual complexity should be less than 300 pages. Therefore, this document far exceeds the normal length of an EIR contemplated in CEQA and should have a review period that reflects this magnitude of project. In my current profession, which is a Professional Engineer, I am unable to contribute my days to reading the document and must utilize my nights and weekends to read the EIR/EIS. Therefore, I was able to get through approximately 1,500 pages of the DEIR/DEIS.

The Authority should be aware that one of the objectives of CEQA and NEPA is to allow the public an opportunity to review and comment on a project to ensure that an agency or project has addressed all concerns and impacts, however the short time frame in which the public was allowed to review the DEIR/DEIS was not sufficient to allow the public to fully review the current DEIR/DEIS. Therefore, it follows that the public was not afforded an appropriate opportunity to provide comprehensive and detailed comments and questions to the DEIR/DEIS. Also the decision makers that rely upon the information included in the DEIR/DEIS and the comments from the public will be making a decision on this project deficient of information.

In my review of the current DEIR/DEIS there were numerous items of concern. Attached with this letter is a list of questions and comments that were discovered as I read the DEIR/DEIS. It is presented in a tabular format and grouped by sections of the DEIR/DEIS. The page number where the comment or question was found is listed on the left and on the right the section taken from the DEIR/DEIS is in black text and my question or comment is written in RED. Below are my comments and concerns with the DEIR/DEIS that are broader issues that were revealed after reading the DEIR/DEIS sections. I request that the concerns and questions attached and the discussion below be addressed in the Final EIR/EIS and be rereleased to the public for another 6-month public review period.

Basis of Draft EIR/EIS

The level of detail included in DEIR/DEIS is considered a 15% design plan set. Typically in engineering and design the 15% plan is considered purely basic and very little detail is included. The use of 15% plans for this size and breadth of project does not seem appropriate and has a great potential to miss or underestimate impacts to the local, regional and state environment. Facilities such as stations and the heavy maintenance facilities do not have enough design information to understand what impacts would be seen on the environment. Traffic impacts, noise impacts, aesthetics and many other features are

Page 2 of 4

621-2

Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

621-2

unknown because no final determination has been made on these facilities. As far as the HSR alignment is concerned many of the ancillary facilities such as power transfer stations, radio signal facilities and the track bed details have not fully been developed and therefore the reader and decision maker are forced to extrapolate impacts given assumptions.

The Authority has indicated that the project will be moved forward via a design/build delivery method. During this process an award is made to one company for the complete design and construction of the project. It is further understood that the development of the Fresno to Bakersfield section will be conducted by multiple design/build contractors. Given the status of plans being at 15%, each design/build contractor will carry forward these plans with the potential for significant changes and modifications to the project. Within the Fresno to Bakersfield section given multiple contracts there is a potential for differing designs leading to different potential impacts to the environment.

Under Section 15147, Technical Detail of CEQA, the Authority is required to provide:

"The information contained in an EIR shall include summarized technical data, maps, plot plans, diagrams, and similar relevant information sufficient to permit full assessment of significant environmental impacts by reviewing agencies and members of the public."

With the inclusion and use of 15% plans and details for this project the reader and the decision maker do **NOT** have enough information to make relevant and effective decisions. With only 15% plans developed as the basis for the DEIR/DEIS the environmental analysis of the project is not much more detailed than the Program Level EIR/EIS. The DEIR/DEIS should provide a higher level of design and specification to ensure that the reader and decision maker has the appropriate level of detail to make decisions.

621-3

Urban vs. Rural Analysis

The DEIR/DEIS does not provide a clear analysis of the issues surrounding the alignment through rural versus agricultural areas. In many cases assumptions are made in regards to urban settings and neglected when addressing a rural atmosphere. Examples include:

- In transportation there is no analysis provided to impacts to farm equipment and movement in the rural areas. Impacts include safety, level of service and movement of oversized equipment on overpass structures.

Page 3 of 4

621-4

- Air Quality - there is no analysis of increased traffic due to farm vehicles and equipment to navigate around the HSR to access fields.
- In relation to the Kings/Tulare station there is no discussion of impacts to agriculture and the rural setting given the construction of an urban transportation station.

621-5

The Authority is required to appropriately analyze the impacts to the surrounding setting. The DEIR/DEIS does not appropriately differentiate between different setting when making analysis. The DEIR/DEIS should be revisited by the Authority to ensure that each impact is appropriately applied to its local setting for analysis.

Conclusion

I appreciate the opportunity to provide comments and concerns on the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Merced to Fresno section of the California High-Speed Rail Project. Reading this document I would like to caution the Authority and the State of California that proceeding with this project only at a 15% level and attempting to extrapolate impacts and mitigation measures will leave a great deal of impacts to be discovered at a later time. As a Professional Civil Engineer, I have the responsibility to propose, analyze and design projects with the utmost integrity. Professionally I feel it is inappropriate to pursue such a monumental project with the limited information that has been gathered so far. I recommend that the California High Speed Rail Authority reject this Draft EIR/EIS and provide a greater amount of design and detail to ensure that the public is given the realistic impacts that will be seen by this project.

621-6

Respectfully Submitted,



Aaron Fukuda

Attachments

- CC: Governor Brown
Federal Railroad Administration
US Environmental Protection Agency
US Army Corp of Engineering
Other interested parties

Page 4 of 4

Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

California High-Speed Train Project EIR/EIS
Merced to Fresno Section

Comments provided by Aaron Fukuda

Fresno to Merced Comments

Section & Page	Comment
621-7 3.2-6	Therefore, the LOS traffic analysis in this section uses a dual baseline approach. That is, the HST project's LOS traffic impacts are evaluated both against existing conditions and against background (i.e., No Project) conditions as they are expected to be in 2035. Under CEQA the Authority is not legally allowed to utilize the baseline as the future expected condition. In several court cases, case law make it clear that an EIR must focus on the impact to the existing environment, not a hypothetical situation. Under CEQA section 15125 and EIR must include a description of the physical environment as they exist at the time of the notice of preparation, or if no notice of preparation is published, at the time the environmental analysis is commenced.
621-8 3.2-26	The Authority and FRA incorporated avoidance measures into the project that have been developed/refined from the mitigation strategies listed in the Program EIR. During project design and construction, the Authority would implement measures to reduce any temporary delays, including but not limited to traffic control/maintenance-of-traffic plans and maintenance of pedestrian access, which would cause construction impacts to be moderate under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA. The EIR/EIS does not provide a detail or information pertaining to the mitigation measures. The reader and/or decision maker is not given any detail as to the programs implemented, timing of implementation or effectiveness, therefore leading to an insufficient level of mitigation for this impact. The EIR/EIS is subsequently deficient in mitigation measures to render the above finding under NEPA and CEQA.
621-9 3.2-26	These impacts may be generally reduced through avoidance and minimization measures and any impacts are expected to be short term and temporary. The Authority does not define what "short term" or "temporary" are. Given the scale and size of many of the individual components of this project, traffic impacts could exist for upwards of 5 to 8 years. The EIR/EIS cannot make the finding that these are short term or temporary and should provide appropriate mitigation measures to address the impacts associated with construction.
621-10 3.2-35	With the introduction of HST service, passenger rail service could be discontinued at Madera. Existing riders would shift to HST service as it becomes available (for example, for Bay Area to Fresno trips). The San Joaquin Route could be particularly important as a connecting service during Phase 1 HST operations, prior to the extension to Sacramento. This would be a negligible impact under NEPA and a less than significant impact under CEQA. The Amtrak service that is provided to Madera is a critical transportation function to the Central Valley. Amtrak provided a subsidized transportation service to locals to access different cities throughout the State. The EIR/EIS provides no data that would allow the reader to ascertain that this impact would be negligible of less than significant. The EIR/EIS fails to provide an analysis on how loss of Amtrak will influence local transportation services and have an socioeconomic impact on the community. This section

621-10	621-11	3.2-43	fails to provide project-level analysis of the potential loss of Amtrak to Madera. With the closure of these crossings, traffic currently accessing SR 99 or areas to the east of SR 99 would be required to travel to the nearest interchanges at Mission Boulevard or Sandy Mush Road/Plainsburg Road. The diverted travel/traffic would not adversely affect the segments and intersections that would receive the traffic, but there may be potential impacts associated with property access as a result of these closures depending on the availability of alternative access routes. Because of potential property access issues, the road closure impacts are considered to be moderate under NEPA and significant under CEQA. The EIR/EIS indicates a Significant impact under CEQA however there is no discussion of mitigation measures. The failure to identify mitigation measures for a significant impact violates CEQA. This follows for the other alternatives listed including the BNSF Alternative and the Hybrid Alternative.
621-12	621-13	3.2-68	Because the HST project includes a plan to provide adequate station parking (and because such parking can be provided), there would be a negligible impact under NEPA and a less than significant impact under CEQA on the existing downtown parking conditions. The EIR/EIS does not provide any description of the potential parking being constructed as part of the project. The section lacks the required project-level data that would allow a reader or decision maker the appropriate level of detail to determine the level of impact to the area. Items such as location, footprint, impact to traffic flows and cost are not outlined or described in this section.
621-14	621-15	3.2-88	Based on the amount of excess public parking within 1 mile of the station, it is estimated that 2035 parking demand can be met with a total of 5,000 additional parking spaces provided in four new parking structures built adjacent to the station by 2035. Can the EIR/EIS provide evidence that a 1 mile radius is appropriate for this analysis. It seems far for a traveler to access parking upwards of 1 mile away from a station. A 1.2 mile radius seems more appropriate.
621-16		3.2-88	Instead, parking would be provided as demand requires. For the opening of the Fresno station in 2020, a combination of parking structures and surface parking lots with a total of about 3,500 spaces would be constructed adjacent to the station. Combined with the estimated 2,400 public parking spaces available in the Downtown Fresno area, this plan would address the estimated 2020 parking demand. An EIR/EIS is not allowed to defer a mitigation measure to a later time. The EIR/EIS states that parking structures will be constructed as needed. The EIR/EIS provides no detail for the reader or decision maker to understand the timing and potential for station parking. The EIR/EIS does not provide project-level mitigation to clearly accommodate parking impacts around the Fresno station.
		3.14-22	In comparison, the HST alternatives would convert farmland for construction of the project, but would also provide opportunities for focusing future development on land that is already urbanized. This could reduce the amount of farmland converted to urban uses to accommodate projected future growth. The EIR/EIS does not provide any convincing data or analysis that would indicate that this project will reduce the amount of farm ground converted. The EIR/EIS does not consider the urban growth pressures that will be placed on the Central Valley by the HSR. This increase growth pressure will cause more housing development and conversion of farmland. Most cities and communities have adopted an outward growth pattern as mainly evidenced by the City of Fresno and their push northward. The EIR/EIS does not properly analyze the current practices and relies upon principles of urban development around stations. The EIR/EIS provides no project-level data to support the claims that the HSR will reduce farmland conversions. An appropriate analysis should be conducted and if determined a significant impact, mitigation measures should be implemented.
		3.2-25	In comparison, the HST alternatives would convert farmland for construction of the

Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

621-16	<p>project, but would also provide opportunities for focusing future development on land that is already urbanized. This could reduce the amount of farmland converted to urban uses to accommodate projected future growth.</p> <p>The EIR/EIS makes very minimal analysis of the construction impacts to construction staging areas. The criteria that it is simply "temporary" is not fully analyzed to determine if practices during construction may yield the site useless for farming. During the three year period, equipment and construction materials will be stored on the site. Chemicals, hazardous materials and fuels will be stored. If any of these material begin got contaminate the site, the field may not be returned in its existing condition. Three years worth of heavy construction traffic will also render the topsoil on the site unusable and the farmer may not have the necessary funds or ability to rehabilitate the field. The EIR/EIS again fails to provide a project-level analysis commensurate with CEQA requirements and does not provide enough information for the reader or decion maker to make an appropriate decision on the impacts of the HSR on temporary construction yards.</p>
621-17	<p>3.14-27 Where this is not possible, however, it is unlikely that farming would continue. In cases where farming is unlikely to continue, these small remainder parcels are identified in this section as a farmland conversion. For this document, analysts reviewed each affected parcel by alternative and associated design option, considered usable and unusable remainders, and made preliminary recommendations for full or partial property acquisitions. The farmland conversion reported in the Project EIR/EIS reflects a 15% design level.</p> <p>The EIR/EIS does not provide any information to the reader or decision maker to indicate how remainder parcels were determined. The EIR/EIS also indicates that decision were made based upon 15% plans, meaning 75% of the critical information that would be used to determine what a remainder parcel will be, is missing. The EIR/EIS should provide a higher detail of project-level design or provide a land parceling study that explains procedure, determination and results to indicate the realistic conversion of prime farmland.</p>
621-18	<p>3.14-27 Consistent with the preferred B+ (Blueprint) Scenario, which incorporates the HST system, farmland conversion would be reduced from 327,000 acres (the business-as-usual, or "A" Scenario) to 209,000 acres, a reduction of 118,000 acres. The project's expected contribution to this reduction would be a potential beneficial effect under each HST alternative.</p> <p>The EIR/EIS misuses this statement and fails to appropriately describe the relevance of the figures to the HSR project. The Valley Blueprint is anticipated to reduce farmland conversion by 118,000 acres, and HSR is potentially a fraction of the number. The EIR/EIS fails to describe what portion of this number it would contribute. The EIR/EIS should put the HST project into context for the reader to determine if the impacts are potentially beneficial. The EIR/EIS also indicates that the HSR will encourage less sprawl, however there are no mitigation measures presented in the EIR/EIS to explain how this will take place.</p>
621-19	<p>3.14-31 The agents may not be able to resolve all issues, and may offer compensation to landowners that demonstrate a hardship from parcel severance. Because these issues would likely be resolved during the right-of-way acquisition process, it is unlikely that parcel severance would result in the additional conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use; therefore, this would be a negligible impact under NEPA and a less than significant impact under CEQA. For additional information on the right-of-way process, see Section 3.12, Socioeconomics, Communities, and Environmental Justice.</p> <p>Being that this EIR/EIS is based on only 15% design and investigation, the reader and decision maker must understand that it is inappropriate and unlikely that a full project-level analysis could be made to justify the statement that parcel remnants will be a negligible and less than significant impact. The statement above also requires some justification in explaining why conducting parcel severance during rights-of-way</p>

Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

621-19		acquisition leads to the findings. It is anticipated that during that process the Authority will find the parcel severance number to increase, therefore moving the decision toward a significant impact, therefore requiring mitigation measures. The parcel severance analysis and procedures should be well detailed in this EIR/EIS or in an attached document.
621-20	3.14-32	The BNSF Alternative would result in permanently closing 27 to 42 roadways, mostly along the wyes, the Mission Ave and Mariposa Way design options, and in the area where the BNSF Alternative reconnects with the UPRR, south of Madera Acres. Large farm equipment that is not street-legal might not be able to use the detours, overpasses, or underpasses on public roadways. This would be a negligible impact under NEPA and a less than significant impact under CEQA. The EIR/EIS makes an incorrect impact analysis in evaluating this as a negligible and less than significant impact. Farming is a practice that requires equipment and vehicles. Without access to fields the land cannot be farmed or managed. The description offered does not indicate one piece of data or analysis that would indicate the finding that was stated. The EIR/EIS is required to provide project-level analysis and plans to allow the reader and decision maker enough information to yield the severity of an impact. If a farmer cannot access his field, his business will fold. With no farming activities on that field the land will remain idle. This is a significant impact that requires analysis and mitigation.
621-21	3.14-36	Based on an overlay of the alignments onto existing dairy facilities, land conversion would impact the operations at three dairies along the Ave 24 Wye, one along the Ave 21 Wye, and two along the West Chowchilla design option. Due to the lack of coordination with agriculture this EIR/EIS makes an incorrect finding. Dairy operations do not consist of corrals, milking barns and wastewater pits. The ground surrounding and possibly remote, support the dairy and operate as a single dairy operations. The other ground supports the dairy feed needs, and also the waste and nutrient management programs. Therefore the EIR/EIS simply underestimates the true acreage of ground that will impact dairies. An analysis of ground that support dairies should be conducted.
621-22	3.14-37	The height of vertical HST structures, such as poles and elevated guideways, could interfere with aerial spraying of agricultural lands adjacent to the alignment. Currently, no restrictions on the distances an aircraft must maintain from utility lines or towers exist (Gage 2010b). The EIR/EIS fails to address the application of fine particulate droplets from aerial application near a wind inducing mechanism with the potential to capture the particulate and transport it along the alignment of the HSR. The EIR/EIS should provide an analysis of the risk, potential and ability to spray pesticide and herbicides near the HSR.
621-23	3.14-37	Coordinate with DOC to identify suitable land for mitigation and purchase agricultural conservation easements from willing sellers at a ratio of no less than 1:1, to preserve Important Farmland in an amount commensurate with the quantity and quality converted farmlands. Work directly or through donation of mitigation fees to a local, regional, or statewide organization or agency whose purpose includes the acquisition and stewardship of agricultural conservation easements (e.g., Central Valley Farmland Trust, American Farmland Trust, and resource conservation districts). Establish easements in the same agricultural regions as the impacts occur. The mitigation measure proposed does not provide any description of how it will be carried out nor any performance measures. Has there been an analysis that shows that there is enough farmland banking available to meet the need of the HSR project, this is prefaced on the fact that the EIR/EIS is able to make an accurate estimate on the amount of farmland removed from production. As a landowner who also promotes farming, this mitigation measure seems to be a simple payoff scheme. Given the land that is being taken from the people who make their living off of the ground, the payment and mitigation accrues to others and seems highly inappropriate.

621-24	3.14-37	Create a farmland consolidation program to sell non-economic remnant parcels to neighboring landowners for consolidation with adjacent property with the goal of providing for continued agricultural use on the maximum feasible amount of non-economic remnant parcels. There is no information provided to the reader or decision maker about how this program would be formed, implemented and carried out. There are also no descriptions pertaining to the legality of the program and the mechanisms that would keep the acquisition and sale of the ground within the restriction of discernment of government property. Again this mitigation measure is not commensurate with a project-level analysis and description.
621-25	3.12-11	Compared to the region, the UPRR/SR 99 Alternative study area had a lower median household income, a greater percentage of the population below the poverty level, and a greater percentage of households with no vehicle. Households that do not have a vehicle are likely to be transit-dependent and have lower incomes. Given that the EIR/EIS identifies the potential to target lower income people with limited transportation capabilities, this would lead the reader and decision maker to believe there is a significant impact. The EIR/EIS should provide a mitigation measure to ensure that lower income people are not adversely impacted by relocation. It may be the case that the Authority will have to provide suitable relocation housing that provides a suitable transportation need such that homeowners are not burdened with being further from transportation access.
621-26	3.12-24	All HST alternatives pass predominantly through areas where concentrations of communities of concern exceed the thresholds identified in Section 3.12.3.1 (i.e., census block groups that contain 50% or more minority persons or 25% or more low-income persons). Looking at the table of meeting presented in Section 7.0, the Authority only conducted a handful, maybe 6-12 outreach meetings that would pertain to truly reaching out to EJ communities and its people. Given that CEQA and NEPA require a deliberate outreach to EJ Communities the reader and the decision maker should see specifically within the section which meeting quality. Given the information provided within this EIR/EIS the Authority did not make a significant attempt to reach EJ communities, therefore should withhold the EIR/EIS while a full EJ outreach program is implemented.
621-27	3.12-31	Under all HST alternatives, benefits associated with the project would likely accrue to a greater degree to communities of concern because they compose a large percentage of the region. These benefits would include improved mobility within the region, improved traffic conditions on freeways as people increasingly use HSTs, and improvements in air quality within the region. The project would economically benefit cities and counties by attracting new employment opportunities and those who live and work near the HST stations. This EIR/EIS has been written as a sales pitch. The first section of this document has cataloged the low income nature of the communities it will interface with. Given stations only in Merced and Fresno, there is no evidence provided in the EIR/EIS that it will benefit the smaller communities without stations like Fairmead and LeGrand. Please either provide evidence or remove statements.
621-28	3.12-33	However, because the overall noise impacts on both residential and commercial properties would not result in adverse impacts, the impacts are expected to be negligible under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA. The EIR/EIS did not identify the proximity and impact to sensitive receptors like schools and medical facilities. Studies have shown that continuous noise can influence children and their learning capacity. The EIR/EIS also has not differentiated the potential impacts that are placed upon lower-income residents that have a harder time coping with the impacts. An impact to a medium income home could be drastically different than a lower income. Medium income homes have a higher quality of building standard whereas lower

Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

621-28		income homes might have a harder time dealing with construction noise and impacts.
621-29	3.12-37	These additional sales tax revenues, though temporary, are beneficial effects for the city and county economies, and therefore considered a beneficial effect under NEPA. As was seen in the previous housing boom in the Central Valley, construction provided a false sense of economic prosperity. When construction was gone, so went the economy. Although this section deals with construction impacts, the EIR/EIS should consider the impact to communities large and small when construction is completed. We plan to infuse billions of dollars into our small communities and it will be gone in 5 to 8 years. The potential for another false economic security is looming with this project and it presents a significant impact that warrants an analysis and potential mitigation.
621-30	3.12-39	Neighborhoods (particularly those near the HST stations) may experience increased vitality in terms of improved access, residential infill, employment growth, and greater patronage of local businesses. The area around the HST stations could improve community cohesion because improvements in the area with the development of the stations could provide new meeting places for residents from the surrounding neighborhoods. Over the last several decades downtown Fresno has tried multiple attempts and revitalizing downtown. Including the construction of the multi-million dollar Chuckansi Park and several revitalization attempts. Each effort is met with limited success. The EIR/EIS in many sections indicates that this project will provide urban growth and revitalize areas, yet provides no actions towards these goal, no project examples, no specific program that would indicate to the reader or decision maker that such benefits would be realized. Without evidence, this EIR/EIS does not perform its project-level analysis and therefore must eliminate the statements that cannot be supported with facts and information.
621-31	3.12-39	The impact would be moderate under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA because it would not be a new impact on most of these communities and neighborhoods. The EIR/EIS improperly draws its impact conclusion in this section. at the beginning of this section the EIR/EIS introduces the HSR as a new corridor that is not associated with any transportation corridor. <i>"The introduction of the new HST corridor that is not adjacent to the existing railway corridors may result in additional areas where physical deterioration could occur and negatively affect property values. This would result from the negative perception of being near a railway corridor and because of impacts related to noise and visual resources."</i> Therefore the impact on these communities would be significant and require mitigation.
621-32	3.12-42	The introduction of the new HST corridor that is not adjacent to the existing railway corridors may result in additional areas where physical deterioration could occur and negatively affect property values. This would result from the negative perception of being near a railway corridor and because of impacts related to noise and visual resources. The EIR/EIS incorrectly draws its impact conclusion by ignoring the fact that homeowners do not have suitable replacement within their own community. A complete displacement to another city may mean losing a job or being separated from family. This presents a significant impact that should be addressed through mitigation.
621-33	3.8-6	Methods for Evaluating Impacts The CEQA and NEPA process require a level of detail that allows the reader and decision maker enough information to make an appropriate level of impact to the environment. Most evaluation methods utilized was simply to overly the alignment of GIS maps. This presents a problem when the aerial map does not appropriately reflect site conditions. The EIR/EIS therefore is deficient in information required to make appropriate analysis for this process. Example: When analyzing impacts to groundwater, depressions in the surface of the earth where waste can collect are not identified. The Aerial photos also do not show depressions that could migrate contaminant towards streams or natural waterways.

621-34	3.8-24	To the extent construction in the stream channel occurs during wet weather, there could be an increase in sediment in the river during the event. In those streams, the effects on water quality during construction would be moderate under NEPA and impacts would be less than significant under CEQA. During wet season, construction equipment will be mobilizing in an out of natural waterways. The EIR/EIS does not address the concerns of other construction hazardous materials like fuels, oils, chemicals, cement and various construction waste that can find its way into the channels while under construction. The EIR/EIS does not provide enough information to establish the finding of moderate impacts and less than significant. The EIR/EIS should make a full analysis of the construction impacts on natural waterways.
621-35	3.8-24	Placing at-grade track sections on embankments with culverts adequately sized and placed would avoid intensifying flood or drainage problems in other locations. Impacts on surface water capacity, connectivity, and quality would be negligible under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA. The EIR/EIS does not provide a sufficient amount of detail that would lead the reader or decision maker to understand the mitigation measure. There are no sizing criteria, installation frequency, maintenance discussion or performance measures that would allow the mitigation measure to minimize the impacts to flood plains to negligible or less than significant.
621-36	3.8-25	Impacts on groundwater from the construction of the HST would be negligible under NEPA and less than significant under CEQA. The EIR/EIS provides not credible information that would lead to this finding of impacts. The large amount of construction equipment and materials that will be utilized in this area represents a significant source of pollutants that can discharged to the ground surface and therefore penetrate into some of the shallow groundwater. The EIR/EIS reported that some areas have groundwater at a depth of 10'. The EIR/EIS is deficient in information provided at this project-level to make this finding. A true impact analysis should be conducted and if necessary mitigation measures developed.

Response to Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011)

621-1

See MF-Response-General-7

621-2

See MF-Response-General-1 and MF-Response-General-23.

621-3

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-2.

Grade separations are designed using the recommended maximum grade of 4%. These grades would work for farm equipment/truck traffic.

621-4

See MF-Response-AQ-4.

621-5

See MF-Response-General-1.

621-6

See MF-Response-General-1 and MF-Response-General-23.

621-7

Per CEQA requirements, existing conditions and existing plus project conditions analysis is presented in Section 3.2. The current project is expected to operate at build-out conditions in the future year 2035. Hence, 2035 analysis was also performed. The 2035 no project baseline conditions include all the approved projects identified in the county Regional Transportation Plans and city General Plans. Additional details regarding CEQA requirements are provided in Transportation Section 3.2.3.

621-8

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-1 and MF-Response-GENERAL-1.

621-9

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-1 and MF-Response-GENERAL-1.

621-10

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-4.

621-11

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-2.

621-12

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-5.

Additional details regarding station footprint area are presented Section 2.4 Alignment, Station, and Heavy Maintenance Facility Alternatives Evaluated in this Project EIR/EIS sections in the EIR/EIS document.

621-13

See MF-Response-TRAFFIC-5.

A one-mile radius from the station represents a conservative estimate for determining locations around the station area that may be affected.

621-14

The EIR/EIS is not deferring mitigation. Parking is a part of the project, not a mitigation measure. As described in Sections 2.4.2.4 and 2.5.3, parking would be installed at each station in conjunction with construction of the station. The Authority would work with the cities of Merced and Fresno and other interested parties to phase the parking supply to support HST ridership demand and the demand of other uses in the vicinity of the station. The stations have not yet been designed (the illustrations in the EIR/EIS are conceptual) and will not be designed for several years. Similarly, actual ridership levels are not known at this time. As discussed in Section 2.2.3 of the EIR/EIS:

“Parking demand expectations are based on HST system ridership forecasts where parking availability is assumed to be unconstrained – meaning 100% of parking demand is assumed to be met. These projections provide a “high” starting point to inform discussions with cities where stations are proposed. While this EIR/EIS identifies locations for parking facilities needed to satisfy the maximum forecast demand, parking is anticipated to be developed over time in phases, while also prioritizing access to the HST system through other modes such as transit, which could lead to less parking being necessary.”

Response to Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

621-14

The Authority does not have sufficient information to provide precise information regarding the timing and design of station parking, therefore, the phasing plan for parking structures has not yet been developed. The implementation of parking will be initiated in conjunction with the construction of the stations and the initiation of rail service and will be phased in accord with ridership levels and demand.

621-15

See MF-Response-GENERAL-3.

621-16

See discussion of construction methods in Section 2.8, Construction Plan and hazardous materials storage in Section 3.10.5.3. Large staging areas are not planned, nor are they specifically identified in the EIR/EIS. The EIR/EIS assumes that construction contractors could use (1) areas underneath overhead structures, (2) small remainder parcels acquired by the Authority, and (3) any of the five HMF alternative sites. Each of these areas has been reviewed for environmental impacts. The construction contractor may choose to use other areas at his or her discretion, but those areas have not been reviewed for environmental impacts in this document. Additional environmental analysis may be necessary for any staging areas outside the ROW if impacts have not been assessed.

621-17

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-3 and MF-Response-GENERAL-1.

621-18

See MF-Response-GENERAL-3.

621-19

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-3.

621-20

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-2.

621-21

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-6 and MF-Response-GENERAL-4.

621-22

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-5.

621-23

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-1 and MF-Response-GENERAL-4.

621-24

See MF-Response-AGRICULTURE-3.

621-25

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-1 and MF-Response-SOCIAL-7.

621-26

See MF-Response-GENERAL-17 and MF-Response-SOCIAL-7.

621-27

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-7 and MF-Response-GENERAL-5.

621-28

See MF-Response-NOISE-2, MF-Response-NOISE-3, MF-Response-NOISE-4, and MF-Response-NOISE-6. Refer to Appendix 3.12-C, Children's Health and Safety Risk Assessment, for additional information on potential impacts to children.

621-29

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-3.

621-30

See MF-Response-GENERAL-3.

Response to Submission 621 (Aaron Fukuda, October 12, 2011) - Continued

621-31

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-2. The EIR/EIS text in Section 3.12.5 has been revised.

621-32

See MF-Response-SOCIAL-1, and MF-Response-SOCIAL-4.

621-33

See MF-Response-GENERAL-1 – the methods used were appropriate for the analysis. With regard to the specific example about water quality, see MF-Response-WATER-5. Site-specific drainage patterns and their potential to direct contaminants toward streams and natural water courses will continue to be evaluated at increasing levels of detail prior to construction – see the Stormwater Management Plan (one of many EIR/EIS technical reports) for additional information.

621-34

See MF-Response-WATER-5. Construction activities within stream channels and their potential to release contaminants into water courses will continue to be evaluated at increasing levels of detail prior to construction – see the Hydraulics and Floodplains Technical Report and the Stormwater Management Plan (both EIR/EIS technical reports) for additional information.

621-35

See MF-Response-WATER-2.

621-36

See MF-Response-WATER-5, which addresses water pollution control for both surface water and groundwater discharges.