GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER

October 2, 2009

The Honorable Raymond H. LaHood
Secretary of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We may talk about "high-speed rail." We may talk about "steel wheel on steel rail" technology. We may use words such as "intermodal" and "energy efficient" and aim for improved travel times and impressive job creation numbers.

But in California, when we talk about transportation, we understand that we're also talking about the person who lives in Fresno but often travels to downtown San Francisco for work. We're talking about the family from the Central Valley wanting to visit Disneyland on a holiday weekend. We're talking about a business person being able to move efficiently from his neighborhood to a city center then to another city center for a meeting – and back again – all within a day and while being productive the entire way.

That's because in California, transportation is more than asphalt, track and airways. It's the means by which we've become the eighth largest economy in the world. It's a part of the reason that our state has given birth to the high-tech industry of the Silicon Valley, the biotech centers in Southern California's Orange and San Diego counties, our agricultural industry that feeds the world and the art and glamour of Hollywood. It's a significant part of the answer to our greenhouse gas reduction goals, and it has the potential to be the remedy for our unemployment ills.

That's why I am proud to submit this application for $4.73 billion in Track 2 funding from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act's (ARRA) High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR). It's an application that supports both our long- and near-term visions for helping our state's transportation systems keep pace with our growing and dynamic population. It's an application that is strongly and widely supported in Californians – by our Legislature, local governments, labor leaders, business groups and environmentalists. And it's an application that I believe supports President Obama's vision for high-speed intercity rail in America.

California already knows the power of effective transportation infrastructure. Our state is home to the nation's most traveled interstate highway (Interstate 405 at some 400,000 vehicles per day), its busiest port (Los Angeles) and to the second, third and sixth busiest intercity passenger rail corridors in the country (constituting more than 20 percent of all Amtrak riders and half of the total ridership on Amtrak's state-supported intrastate, intercity services).

With California's population projected to rise by 12 million people in the next two decades (to 50 million by 2030), it is essential that we continue to improve our transportation systems and provide more transit options. Doing so is critical to California's environmental goals, which are the most aggressive in the nation when it comes to reducing climate change-causing greenhouse gas emissions. And it's critical to putting Californians back to work quickly, especially in areas of the state where unemployment now tops 15 percent. Our proposed high-speed rail system alone will generate 600,000 construction-related jobs, nearly 130,000 of them within the coming few years if we are awarded this ARRA funding.

Our vision for an improved transportation system in California includes as a backbone an 800-mile true high-speed rail system traveling up to 220 miles per hour and linking our state's major economic centers, from Los Angeles to San Francisco via our growing Central Valley, and then up to Sacramento and down to San Diego. The system – sure to be the first of its kind on our continent – will provide connections to airports, regional passenger rail systems, bus lines and bike paths so that an integrated web of transit systems makes it easy to move any Californian across the state seamlessly, efficiently and in a way that improves our environment, our quality of life and our state's overall productivity.

I've summarized our application and high-speed intercity rail priorities in an attachment to this letter. It's truly a vision that will redefine and reinvigorate the face of the nation's most populous state, just as the construction of Interstate 5 did decades ago.

Clearly, our application represents much more than just a vision. More than any other state or region in our country, California is poised to make true high-speed rail a reality. Since 1990, the state has invested more than $2 billion in its existing intercity passenger rail program. And since 1996, the California High-Speed Rail Authority has been forging ahead to design and plan our proposed high-speed rail system. This past November, California voters supported this historic project by approving a $9.95 billon bond measure – some of which we pledge to use to match HSIPR funding dollar-for-dollar. That means California will double the federal government's investment and double the job creation. No other application you receive will be able to match that.

As California continues to grow, so do its possibilities. For those possibilities to remain limitless, its transportation options continue to increase. And as grows California, so grows the nation. With the investment and inspiration of a transportation network in the Golden State anchored by true high-speed rail, we will help to ensure that our state and our nation remain prosperous. It's for the traveler moving from city to city in our large state, the family on holiday and the biotech scientist traveling from Orange County to our state's capital to share a promising lab discovery.

California is the first place in our nation where we will see a true high-speed rail system that is effectively tied into other modes of transportation, dramatically improves mobility, improves the environment by reducing greenhouse gases, and quickly produces hundreds of thousands of quality jobs. And therefore we believe that California ought to be the first place in our nation where ARRA funding for high-speed intercity rail is spent.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger

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ATTACHMENT
SUMMARY: CALIFORNIA'S APPLICATION
American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA)
High-Speed Intercity Passenger Rail Program (HSIPR)
Track 2 Priorities

- High-Speed Rail – Los Angeles to Anaheim Section

$2.1875 billion

This will be the first true high-speed rail track in the nation. Because of significant work already completed and because of strong support from local jurisdictions, this section of our proposed line is far ahead of the others. The line will include intermodal stations in Los Angeles and Anaheim and efficiently link one the nation's largest cities to one of the world's best-known tourist attractions. The project will be constructed in cooperation with Caltrans to immediately begin improving existing service during build-out. Dollar-for-dollar matching funds from California would total an investment of $4.375 billion dollars, which will generate 53,700 jobs beginning in 2011.

- High-Speed Rail – Central Valley

$1.2855 billion

You can't have true high-speed rail without California's Central Valley, where trains will reach 220 mph. Additionally, this is where California will build its test track so the trainsets can be tested – a necessity before true high-speed trains ever make their way to the United States. The work on this section will additionally bring existing trains in the Valley to a minimum of 110 mph – attaining higher-speed intercity rail lines while California's high-speed backbone is still being constructed. Dollar-for-dollar matching funds from California would total an investment of $2.571 billion dollars, which will generate 27,000 jobs in the region of California where unemployment is the highest.

- High-Speed Rail – San Jose to San Francisco

$980 million

Nowhere in our state is support for high-speed intercity rail stronger than in the Bay Area. This section would connect California's 3rd-largest city to San Francisco, through the Peninsula, bringing myriad connections to BART and Caltrain regional rail lines. It includes funds to greatly expand existing stations. Dollar-for-dollar matching funds from California would total an investment of $1.96 billion dollars, which will generate 34,200 jobs beginning immediately.

- High-Speed Rail – Entire System Preliminary Engineering and Environmental Clearance Work (NEPA/CEQA)

$276.5 million

This funding would support the completion of environmental work and preliminary engineering for the entire high-speed rail system, as well as for the Altamont Corridor Rail Project, enabling California to move on to construction on the entire system and guaranteeing that key environmental clearance and obligation dates are met. With this funding, the entire 800-mile system will truly be shovel-ready.