



**CALIFORNIA
HIGH-SPEED RAIL
AUTHORITY**

BRIEFING: August 2, 2012, BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #6

TO: Dan Richard and Authority Board Members

FROM: Jeff Abercrombie, Area Program Manager, Merced – Bakersfield

DATE: July 25, 2012

RE: Fresno to Bakersfield Section Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report/Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement

Discussion

The Authority and Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) released the Fresno to Bakersfield Section Revised Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review and comment on July 20, 2012.

The Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS is an update to the Draft EIR/EIS document previously released in August 2011, and provides an analysis of the Hanford West Bypass Alternative; an analysis of the revisions to other alignment segments; and a design option in Downtown Bakersfield, termed the Bakersfield Hybrid, that combines elements of the two existing alignment alternatives through that community. The Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS also contains additional information and analysis requested in public comments received on the Draft EIR/EIS, and changes that reflect Authority policy presented in the Final EIR/EIS for the Merced to Fresno section of the California High-Speed Rail project.

The Fresno to Bakersfield Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS was made available for public/agency review and comment on July 20, 2012 for a 60-day public review period that will extend to 5:00 p.m. on September 20, 2012. The Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS has been:

- Posted on the Authority's and Federal Railroad Administration's (FRAs) websites as of July 17, 2012;
- Available to review at the Authority's office in hard copy or on compact disk (CD), and available for the public to request a copy in CD format ;

- Available to review hard copies at public libraries, community centers, and other high-traffic public buildings in the Fresno to Bakersfield area; and
- Mailed in CD format to elected officials, public agencies, and members of the public that requested a copy.

As with previous Authority practice, most of the copies distributed consisted of a CD, since a limited number of paper copies were printed.

The Fresno to Bakersfield Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS presents the alignment, station, and heavy maintenance facility (HMF) alternatives, but does not recommend a preferred alternative. Comments received on the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, as well as the comments received on the original Draft EIR/EIS, will be used to evaluate the alternatives, develop a staff recommendation for a preferred alternative to the Board for inclusion in the Final EIR/EIS, and prepare the Final EIR/EIS.

Public Notification

With release of the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS, the Authority notified individuals, property owners, community groups, and public agencies through the following methods:

- Publication in newspapers of general circulation in the Fresno-Bakersfield project areas;
- Posting in the offices of the county clerks for each county in which the project will be located;
- Mailing to all owners/occupants within the project footprint, and 1,000 ft. beyond in urban areas, and a quarter-mile in rural areas;
- Mailing/emailing to all organizations and individuals who have previously requested notice of the EIR/EIS;
- Mailing to all individuals and organizations that have previously participated in Fresno-Bakersfield meetings (and have provided contact information);
- News releases, website notices, email notifications, and the posting of flyers within each community;
- Notification efforts have also occurred with elected officials, local government staff, Native American Tribes and their representatives, businesses, and non-profit and community-based organizations.

Public Hearings and Workshops

Public meetings will be held in Rosedale, Wasco, Corcoran, and Fresno, between August 13 and 16, 2012. The public meetings will use an open house format with display boards, staff to answer questions, and an area where attendees can complete comment forms, make verbal comments to a court reporter, and/or input comments directly into the Authority website. The public meetings differ from the public hearings as the focus will be to inform the attendees how to comment on the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS and because there will not be an opportunity for attendees to make verbal comments in front of an audience.

Per FRA regulations, after 30 days of the review period, public hearings will be held in Fresno, Hanford, and Bakersfield to hear directly from individuals, organizations and local agencies. The public hearings are scheduled to convene on August 27, 28, and 29, 2012, and will be held from 3 p.m. to 8 p.m. The public hearings start with an open house with display boards and project personnel to answer questions, and an area where attendees can complete comment forms, make verbal comments to a court reporter,

and/or input comments directly into the Authority website. The open house will be followed by a formal public hearing proceeding where attendees can make verbal comments in front of an audience and a court reporter captures those comments.

Comments can be submitted by letter, email, at public hearings and meetings, or via the Authority's website. The Authority and FRA will respond to comments received during the public comment period and include responses to comments on the original Draft EIR/EIS and the Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS in the Fresno to Bakersfield Final EIR/EIS anticipated for release in early 2013. The Record of Decision/Notice of Determination for the Fresno to Bakersfield Section is anticipated in early March 2013.

Public Involvement Activities

Public involvement activities are ongoing to educate stakeholders on the project and receive feedback on alignment features. Outreach meetings have included:

Bakersfield Homeless Shelter	Fresno Council of Governments
California Retired County Employees Association	Fresno Rescue Mission
Caltrans	Fresno Economic Development Corporation
California State Board of Food and Agriculture	Kern County
City of Bakersfield	Kern Council of Governments
City of Fresno	Kings County
City of Hanford	Impacted Businesses
City of Wasco	Irrigation and Water Districts
City of Wasco Housing Authority	San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council
Fresno County	Tulare County
Laton Community Services District	Bakersfield High School
Kern High School District	Save Bakersfield
Department of Pesticide Regulations	Kern Grade Separation District

Staff Recommendations

- No action required at this time. This is an informational item.

Attachments

- None. A presentation will be made at the Board meeting.