



**CALIFORNIA  
HIGH-SPEED RAIL  
AUTHORITY**

**BRIEFING: March 1, 2012 BOARD MEETING AGENDA ITEM #9**

**TO: Chairman Richard and Authority Board Members**  
**FROM: Jeff Abercrombie, Regional Director**  
**DATE: March 1, 2012**  
**RE: Presentation on the revised Fresno-Bakersfield Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statements**

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**Discussion**

The Fresno to Bakersfield section of the California High-Speed Rail project released, in summer 2011, a Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR)/Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for public review and comment. More than 1,500 comments were received, with many issues focused on community impacts, agricultural impacts, funding source(s), and private property impacts.

Revisions and additions to the environmental analyses are currently being made, including changes based on comments received through the Draft EIR/EIS comment period, which ended Oct. 13, 2011. Changes will be documented in a Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS for the Fresno to Bakersfield section, anticipated for release in early summer 2012. A 45-day public review and comment period will follow, as well as another round of public hearings.

The revised environmental document will include a new alignment (additional) option to the west of Hanford, referred to as the Hanford West Bypass. The Hanford East Bypass remains in the document. Preliminary engineering for the Hanford West Bypass is completed, the details of which will be included in the revised environmental document. In addition, the revised environmental documents will include revisions to other alignment segments along the entire Fresno to Bakersfield section, including a Bakersfield Hybrid solution that includes elements of both the existing Bakersfield alignments; the BNSF Alternative and the Bakersfield South Alternative. The Bakersfield Hybrid solution addresses many concerns raised by stakeholders in the Bakersfield region. Discussions with stakeholders in the City of Bakersfield and Kern County are ongoing and may lead to further refinements prior to the release of the revised environmental documents.

Formal responses to comments from both the current and revised environmental documents will be incorporated into the Final EIR/EIS, anticipated for release in the fall of 2012. The Record of Decision/Notice of Determination is still anticipated before the end of 2012.

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

- Fresno County
- Fresno County Transportation Authority
- Fresno COG
- Fresno Farm Bureau and other Agricultural interests
- Kings County
- Kern County
- Kern COG
- Tulare County
- City of Fresno
- City of Hanford
- City of Wasco
- City of Bakersfield
- Various Irrigation and Water Districts
- Caltrans
- Businesses with in Construction Package #1

**Staff Recommendations**

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

**Attachments:**

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