



SAN JOAQUIN  
REGIONAL  
RAIL COMMISSION

March 27, 2014

Mr. Jeff Morales  
CEO, CA High Speed Rail Authority  
770 L Street, Suite 800  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Morales:

The CA High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) and the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC) have had a very productive relationship in advancing work on several corridors in Northern California. We are actively involved as your regional partner in the planning for the Phase II Altamont Corridor Improvements and the development of the Merced to Sacramento High Speed Rail Corridor, and continue as an information channel between HSRA and the local communities. As part of our ongoing partnership, SJRRRC is requesting a one-year time-only extension of the current consultant contract for the work in the Altamont Corridor. Additionally, SJRRRC is working with your team to facilitate a \$1 million contribution of SJRRRC funds for the advancement of this important work.

Last year, SJRRRC was supportive of the re-bid for the work in the Merced to Sacramento Corridor, based upon the status of the work effort. We agreed that there are times when the work effort can be handed off at logical "break points". We understood that and we worked with our various committees and communities to create support for this process. However, the Altamont Corridor project is in the middle of critical activities that did not yet lend themselves to such a hand-off.

The ACE Corridor "ACEforward" effort is in the process of completing the initial Alternatives Analysis to define the alternatives to carry forward both the program and project level EIR/EIS work. We will be presenting our recommendations to the SJRRRC Board on April 4, and requesting their continued assistance to help fund the work effort. Once we receive approval from the Board it will likely require an additional two to three months to complete the Draft for the Alternatives Analysis chapter of the EIR/EIS.

Throughout the study area, we have been able to narrow down to a reasonable number of alternatives with the exception of the Niles Canyon/Fremont area. In the Niles Canyon/Fremont area we currently have as many as eight different concepts which we need to further evaluate. The improvements in this area are needed to accommodate the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> daily round trips of ACE service, so this work must be done at a project level. It is not practicable to carry all of these alternatives through the Project EIR/EIS so we will need to conduct additional program-level work on these alternatives and perform a second screening. Assuming our team continues to work without stoppage, I estimate that this work should be done no later than the end of calendar year 2014. In addition, we will need to continue working with UPRR to narrow down the Niles/Fremont alternatives.

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At the same time, we have been working on completing our initial ridership and revenue forecasts. The initial forecast should be completed and publicly available by May of this year. However, in order to advance our EIR/EIS, we will need to complete a number of additional forecasts for the various alternatives being carried forward along with a sensitivity analysis for the purposes of developing our Draft Financing Plan. As you know, ridership and revenue forecasts are a critical path item for the EIR/EIS process and can take years to develop. The ridership work and financial plan should be complete by June 2015 if we can keep this program moving forward.

This last year we have made great progress with the *ACEforward* program with very limited resources. We have initiated the formal EIR/EIS process, completed scoping, done extensive outreach, and we have nearly completed our Alternatives Analysis work and our initial ridership and revenue forecasts. We respectfully request your consideration for a one-year time-only extension for the AECOM team so that this excellent work can continue to move forward in a timely fashion.

I look forward to working with you on this effort.

Sincerely,



Stacey Mortensen  
Executive Director  
San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission