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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
EIR/EIS PUBLIC COMMENTS HEARING

MERCED COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING
BOARD CHAMBERS
2222 M STREET, THIRD FLOOR
MERCED, CALIFORNIA

AUGUST 30, 2007

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REPORTED BY: DEBORAH FUQUA, CSR#12948

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A P P E A R A N C E S

FRAN FLOREZ

Vice-Chairperson

California High-Speed Rail Authority

(Moderator)

ROD DIRIDON

Board Member

California High-Speed Rail Authority

MEHDI MORSHED

Executive Director

California High-Speed Rail Authority

CARRIE POURVAHIDI

Deputy Director

California High-Speed Rail Authority

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P U B L I C S P E A K E R S

Stacie Dabbs for - PSM1 Congressman Dennis Cardoza	Larry Miller - PSM13 Charles E. White - PSM15
John Pedrozo - PSM2	Dennis Pinion - PSM16
Larry Salinas - PSM3	Rod Webster - PSM17
Peter E. Weber - PSM4	Tom Grave - PSM18
Brad Aborn - PSM5	Ken Gosting - PSM19
Scott Haywood - PSM6	Ruth Sellers - PSM20
Andrew Chesley - PSM7	Joe Rivero - PSM21
Vince Roos for - PSM9 Congressman Costa	Bill Sanford - PSM22 Annette Allsup - PSM23
Lee R. Boese Jr., D.D.S. - PSM14	DeeDee D'Adamo - PSM24
Carl Pollard - PSM8	Uday Bali - PSM25
Lee Snyder, M.D. - PSM10	Rick Osorio - PSM26
Dianne Fritz - PSM11	Trevor Albertson - PSM27
Dr. David Lighthall - PSM12	JoAnne Clarke - PSM28
	Carolyn Vara - PSM29

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1 Thursday, August 30, 2007 4:15 o'clock p.m.

2 ---o0o---

3 P R O C E E D I N G S

4 (Following proceedings transcribed

5 from audio tape)

6 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Good afternoon. I
7 think we're just about ready to start, so those of you
8 who haven't found a seat....

9 Just to give you a heads up, we do have a
10 couple of folks from the Authority who haven't arrived.
11 And they'll be here shortly, and we'll try to maybe
12 pause and make introductions at that time. Our court
13 reporter also is on his or her way; I don't know who it
14 is. But we have a way to record the hearing.

15 So at this time, let me just introduce myself.
16 My name is Fran Florez, and I'm the vice-chair for the
17 California High-Speed Rail Authority. To my left is
18 Carrie Pourvahidi, a deputy director.

19 And I want to say first of all, thank you.
20 This is great. There are a number of you here.
21 Welcome, and I'm glad that you're here so that you can
22 provide us with testimony so that we can make a very
23 good decision when the time comes.

24 So we're going to go ahead and begin. You
25 know, we've got maybe from now until maybe a little

1 after 6:00 or however long it's going to take.

2 We don't have that many people that are going
3 to speak, so we won't put a time limit. However, I
4 would request that, if you're here representing a
5 group, if you can choose your spokesperson and maybe
6 make your presentation. And if you need to expand on
7 it, that would be wonderful.

8 So we're here to take testimony from everyone
9 who wants to do so. So may I call -- first of all, I
10 would like to call Stacie Dabbs from Congressman Dennis
11 Cardoza's office.

12 And just to give you a kind of a heads up of
13 who is on first or whatever that saying goes, I don't
14 know, the Honorable John Pedrozo, our county supervisor
15 from Merced County, will come up next.

16 Thank you.

17 STACIE DABBS: Thank you. I would like to read
18 into the record written testimony that will be provided
19 on behalf of Congressman Dennis Cardoza.

20 "I appreciate that opportunity to provide
21 comment to the California High-Speed Rail Authority
22 regarding the draft program EIR/EIS. I concur with the
23 Authority's conclusion that our existing transportation
24 system does not meet California's current
25 transportation needs, much less the demands of our

PSM1-1

1 growing population. With growth in the state projected
2 to increase by almost 50 percent by the year 2050, it
3 is crucial that we act now to meet this state's
4 transportation infrastructure needs. High-Speed Rail
5 offers a commonsense solution to our state's
6 transportation, congestion, and air quality challenges
7 and also provides vision for our state's infrastructure
8 and economic future.

9 "High-Speed Rail offers tremendous benefits to
10 California's Central Valley. The Central Valley has
11 experienced the highest growth rate in the state in
12 recent years. This trend is expected to continue well
13 into the future. Although growth in the Valley has
14 brought economic opportunity, it has also brought with
15 it congestion, poor air quality, impaired travel
16 reliability, and longer travel times.

17 "Additionally, the I-5 and Highway 99
18 corridors provide the major surface transportation link
19 between the northern and southern parts of the state.
20 As main arteries of the state's transportation system,
21 it is especially important for the High-Speed Rail
22 Authority to consider the unique challenges and needs
23 of the Central Valley when evaluating the draft program
24 EIR/EIS.

25 "The Central Valley ranks among the worst air

PSM1-1
Cont.

PSM1-2

1 quality regions in the nation. The San Joaquin Valley
2 Air Pollution Control District, with jurisdiction over
3 eight San Joaquin Valley counties, stretching from San
4 Joaquin to Kern counties, has recently been designated
5 as an extreme non-attainment area for ozone. The
6 extreme non-attainment designation is shared only with
7 the Los Angeles air basin.

8 "A high-speed rail system with links up and
9 down the Valley will help to alleviate our air quality
10 and congestion problems. I appreciate the Authority's
11 analysis of our air quality benefits and impacts which
12 estimate a significant decrease in criteria pollutants
13 with High-Speed Rail and wish to underscore the
14 importance of the Authority's consideration of air
15 quality benefits as it evaluates the draft program
16 EIR/EIS, particularly in extreme non-attainment
17 regions.

18 "The draft program EIR/EIS concludes that
19 development, construction, operation and maintenance of
20 the High-Speed Rail will result in the creation of as
21 many as 450,000 jobs in this state. As a member of
22 Congress representing some of the highest unemployment
23 areas in the nation, such as Merced County, I believe
24 the potential this project brings for economic
25 development in the Valley is especially important.

PSM1-2
Cont.

PSM1-3

1 All too often, the Central Valley lags behind economic
2 development and job growth experienced in other areas
3 of the state.

4 "As you consider alignment options, I would
5 like to stress the importance of linking the entire
6 Central San Joaquin Valley with the other major urban
7 areas of the state, connecting Valley communities
8 together, and connecting the Valley to other major
9 urban areas of the state, opening greater economic,
10 educational and cultural opportunities to the Valley.

11 "Additionally, I strongly urge the Authority
12 to incorporate the selection of a main repair and
13 maintenance facility and related test tracks in Merced
14 County at Castle Airport Aviation and Development
15 Center, also known as the former Castle Air Force Base.
16 The draft program EIR/EIS outlines the High-Speed Rail
17 System's needs for a main repair and maintenance
18 facility. The Castle Airport Aviation and Development
19 Center is an ideal location for such a repair and
20 maintenance facility. Castle meets the outward
21 criteria and carries with it the added benefit of
22 public ownership, available land, and opportunities to
23 connect to other rail and air services.

24 "I commend the Authority Board Members and
25 staff for their diligent work on the draft program

PSM1-3
Cont.

PSM1-4

PSM1-5

1 EIR/EIS. I recognize there is much work to be done on
2 the document and that funding is not assured for this
3 project. This should not let us lose sight of a vision
4 and of our goal. It is my hope that these funding
5 challenges will provide the Authority with the
6 opportunity to further improve proposals for financing
7 of this project, especially for reaching out to the
8 private sector to develop public-private partnerships
9 in order to fully realize the goals of High-Speed Rail.

10 "I appreciate the opportunity to provide my
11 comments and look forward to working with the Authority
12 on this project."

13 Thank you.

14 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you very
15 much.

16 Now if I could call on chairman of the board
17 of supervisors for Merced County, John Pedrozo.

18 JOHN PEDROZO: Thank you, and welcome to Merced.
19 We appreciate the opportunity to speak at this public
20 hearing and are pleased that the additional public
21 hearing has been scheduled in Stockton on September
22 18th. I want to thank the High-Speed Rail Commission
23 for coming to Merced County to hold this meeting. The
24 Central Valley is poised for great growth, and there is
25 a tremendous opportunity here. We appreciate the

PSM1-5
Cont.

PSM2-1

1 opportunity to have the people from our communities
2 have easy access to public hearings in our area.

3 As the Merced County Board of Supervisors'
4 representative for rail issues and as a supporter of
5 passenger rail, I believe the proposed California
6 High-Speed Rail System may hold the answers to many of
7 the problems that we face in the region and the state.

8 Air quality is consistent concern around the
9 state, but especially here in the Valley.
10 The proposed High-Speed Rail System can help reduce
11 congestion of automobiles on our highways. By reducing
12 congestion, the system will help reduce air pollution
13 and will improve the quality of life to meet the
14 increasing growth of our state.

15 As our state and region continue to grow, we
16 have learned that passenger air service also needs to
17 be supplemented with service on the ground. By adding
18 high-speed rail service throughout the state, we would
19 also be able to reduce congestion on intra-state air
20 traffic.

21 I'm here to support the California High-Speed
22 Rail System and support the system connecting the
23 Central Valley to Northern California and the Bay Area
24 and Southern California.

25 Since we are in the heart of San Joaquin

PSM2-1
Cont.

PSM2-2

PSM2-3

PSM2-4

1 Valley, Merced County must be an integral part of the
2 entire system and how it will come together. We
3 appreciate that Merced has been included as a tentative
4 station on the proposed routes and pledge our continued
5 support for that station.

6 In addition, Merced County has incredible
7 assets at our disposal in the form of Castle Air Force
8 Base, now known as Castle Commerce Center. Merced
9 County has long planned a full reuse of the old air
10 base. This project would fit well in the long-term
11 plans for Castle, utilizing the commerce center as a
12 maintenance/construction hub for the system.

13 It is centrally located at an already
14 existing rail line, and there is space available for
15 use. I feel strongly that the High-Speed Rail can move
16 California and the Central Valley over to meeting
17 current and future transportation demands.

18 And I know Merced County should and will have
19 a very essential role in the completion of this
20 project.

21 Thank you for this opportunity, and we look
22 forward to seeing this project progress. Thank you
23 very much.

24 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you
25 Supervisor, and thanks for letting me sit in your

PSM2-4
Cont.

PSM2-5

PSM2-6

1 chair.

2 I'd like to call next Mr. Larry Salinas,
3 representing UC Merced.

4 And then Pete Weber, you'll be on next.

5 LARRY SALINAS: Good afternoon, Commissioner
6 Florez, welcome to Merced County. I'm Larry Salinas,
7 Executive Director of Governmental Relations Group, UC
8 Merced, and I'm here to present a letter on behalf
9 Chancellor Steve Kang.

10 Some of the points within the letter were
11 covered by a previous speaker from the Congressman's
12 office and also were stated by Supervisor Pedrozo. So
13 I won't repeat verbatim, but I would like to
14 extrapolate from this letter and note that there is
15 another constituency here that would be served by a
16 high-speed rail service into the Central Valley, and
17 that is the UC Merced students. And I want to point
18 out that they are already actively involved in the
19 community issues and activities. And I want to point
20 out that some of them are here -- if you would stand --
21 that they're already taking part in civic duties.

22 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: All right.
23 Welcome.

24 That's the future of California.

25 LARRY SALINAS: You're correct. That is the

PSM3-1

1 future of California.

2 And I think in large part, one of the needs
3 that needs to be recognized is actually for students
4 that are looking to access UC Merced. These high-speed
5 trains would provide great enhanced access to the
6 campus for not only the students, but faculty, staff
7 and colleagues from other universities and other
8 visitors throughout the state and the nation.

9 In addition, the High-Speed Rail would permit
10 students from both Northern and Southern California, of
11 which we have about 30 percent of our student
12 population from the Southern California region and
13 about 27 percent from the Bay Area -- they would be
14 excited to have something of this caliber to bring them
15 from home to school.

16 But also very important, it was stated about
17 the air quality and the air quality challenges in the
18 Central Valley. And no one is immune from that.
19 Having high-speed rail service would certainly
20 dramatically reduce the number of automobiles currently
21 commuting to the campus. And we would also love to see
22 that it would be significantly impacting the Valley's
23 air quality, which, of course, is a major health
24 concern and an area that's being studied and researched
25 today at UC Merced.

PSM3-1
Cont.

PSM3-2

1 I want to again welcome you to Merced County,
2 and I want to offer the Chancellor's letter of support
3 for the High-Speed Rail Initiative and also echo the
4 attention and the need to look at, perhaps, considering
5 Castle Air Force Base as a maintenance hub as well.
6 And this letter will be copied to our congressional
7 member, our state legislators and the board of
8 supervisors.

9 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Very good, yes.
10 Thank you.

11 And if I could call an Mr. Peter Weber from
12 the California Partnership.

13 PETER WEBER: Good evening, Mrs. Florez. It's a
14 pleasure to be here. I serve on the California
15 Partnership Board, and I'm here today to provide the
16 Board an update on our working position on High-Speed
17 Rail as adopted by the board of the Partnership.

18 As you know by now, having listened to other
19 representatives of the Partnership in previous hearings
20 in the Bay Area, the Partnership is a unique
21 public-private conglomeration created by Governor
22 Schwarzenegger to develop what the Governor calls a
23 strategic action proposal to improve the economic
24 vitality and quality of life for Valley residents.

25 The plan was developed, and we have now moved

PSM3-3

PSM3-4

PSM4-1

1 into implementation. High-Speed Rail is considered by
2 the Partnership as foundational to the future
3 prosperity of the San Joaquin Valley. Over the past 20
4 years, while the population increased by 60 percent,
5 our VMT, our vehicle miles traveled, increased by 150
6 percent, two and a half times as much. We just simply
7 cannot continue to live this way, particularly in a
8 region that is now generally acknowledged as having the
9 worst air quality in the nation, with 80 percent of our
10 NOx emissions coming from mobile sources.

11 We simply must find better ways of moving
12 people and goods, and High-Speed Rail is the answer to
13 the -- a better way of moving people. For those who
14 may not be aware of this, 44 percent of all expected
15 ridership on the bullet train involves people who would
16 be traveling in and out of the Valley or within the
17 Valley.

18 I'm content to let the folks in the Bay Area
19 and Los Angeles think that this is all about getting to
20 L.A., from L.A. to San Francisco as quickly as
21 possible, but that, as it turns out, is only about 12
22 percent of the projected ridership.

23 This is really about interconnecting the three
24 major regions of the state and has huge implications to
25 the benefit, certainly, of the Valley but also to the

PSM4-1
Cont.

PSM4-2

1 benefit of all Californians. That is why the
2 Partnership took a strong advocacy position with the
3 Governor and the legislature in support of funding the
4 Authority at a level that would enable us to make
5 progress toward making this long-held dream into
6 reality.

7 I hesitate to mention this, but I'm afraid I
8 remember when Jim Costa and John Garamendi and others
9 were first talking about this almost 20 years ago.

10 I want to congratulate the Board and the staff
11 for preserving \$20.5 million in the state budget. And
12 if we in the Partnership were in some way helpful, I
13 congratulate us as well.

14 As you've been told earlier, the Partnership
15 held a special meeting of Valley stakeholders on August
16 9th on High-Speed Rail, obtaining comments from a large
17 and diverse group of stakeholders from the eight-county
18 region. The following day, the board of the California
19 Partnership adopted a working position that opened the
20 question of our preference for routing alternatives to
21 the Bay Area. That question has now been resolved.
22 So we are submitting to you today a revised working
23 position.

24 The main changes to what you have seen before
25 are as follows: First, our position is that the

1 High-Speed Rail Authority should evaluate the economic
2 viability of developing both the Altamont and Pacheco
3 Pass routes to see if each one of those routes, on its
4 own merits, will generate an economic surplus.

PSM4-4
Cont.

5 If it does, then we would like to see both
6 routes implemented. If it turns out that that is not
7 viable, that only one of the two routes can be
8 implemented, or if it turns out that one of the two
9 routes must be implemented first, they cannot be
10 implemented concurrently, then our strong preference is
11 for the Altamont route.

12 The second revision in our position statement
13 also makes it clear that we think it's important for
14 Amtrak to continue to be supported as an adjunct rail
15 system to the high-speed train.

PSM4-5

16 For those who may not have previously heard
17 the position statement from the Partnership, the
18 additional elements to the statement are that
19 High-Speed Rail needs to serve the entire San Joaquin
20 Valley, Bakersfield to Sacramento, and the region must
21 stay together as it works towards implementation of the
22 initiative.

PSM4-6

23 Second, the High-Speed Rail ballot measure
24 must stay on the 2008 ballot. And we offer our support
25 of whatever we can do to make sure that that happens

PSM4-7

1 and not only that it stays on the ballot but that it
2 gets approved by the voters.

3 Third, the federal government needs to
4 contribute to the High-Speed Rail project. Congress
5 should seriously consider the establishment of a
6 federal high-speed rail authority with powers similar
7 to those of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

8 As you know, Senators Feinstein and Boxer and
9 a number of the members of our federal delegation,
10 including Congressman Costa, I believe Congressman
11 Cardoza as well, have all joined together to try to
12 make that happen.

13 Passenger rail is also a priority for the
14 Valley in its immediate-needed demand, while the
15 High-Speed Rail initiative will address mid- and
16 long-term demand.

17 We also pointed out in our position statement
18 the land use patterns are a critical success factor for
19 High-Speed Rail. The blueprint regional planning
20 process needs to be tightly connected to the efforts to
21 implement High-Speed Rail in the Valley.

22 And finally, the route between San Joaquin
23 Valley and the Bay Area will have a significant impact
24 on the Valley being served as an entire region.

25 I want to close by thanking the Authority for

PSM4-7
Cont.

PSM4-8

PSM4-9

PSM4-10

PSM4-11

PSM4-12

1 scheduling the second meeting in Stockton. We think
2 that you're going to see a lot of interest in the
3 Valley. And one meeting clearly isn't going to be
4 enough. And so we appreciate your quick response to
5 our request for a second meeting, which I understand is
6 going to be held in Stockton on September 18th.

7 Thank you very much.

8 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

9 If I can call on -- representing the Board of
10 Supervisors from Mariposa County, Brad Aborn.

11 BRAD ABORN: Good afternoon. I'm Brad Aborn,
12 Supervisor from Mariposa County. And we have a
13 position letter that was approved unanimously by our
14 board of supervisors here recently. And I would like
15 to read that to you as a position statement.

16 Mariposa County is the oldest member of the
17 San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee, and as such, we are
18 very concerned about the plans and implementation of
19 future High-Speed Rail transportation. As we progress
20 through the planning stage for the High-Speed Rail
21 route between Los Angeles through the San Joaquin
22 Valley to San Francisco, we are approaching a very
23 critical decision point regarding the route to traverse
24 the Diablo Mountain Range into the San Francisco Bay
25 Area and into the city of San Francisco.

1 Historically, the Altamont Pass has been
2 recognized by most as the preferred route compared to
3 the Pacheco Pass to the south. The Altamont route
4 offers a shorter distance between Los Angeles and San
5 Francisco and offers high-speed service to a greater
6 number of passengers.

7 Additionally, the Altamont route will add more
8 San Joaquin Valley cities to be served by high-speed
9 rail. By contrast, the Pacheco route will be longer,
10 through more rugged terrain, and will enter the South
11 Bay Area cities, which are in very close proximity with
12 each other. High-Speed Rail will have to compete them
13 with other established forms of surface transportation
14 such as BART and commuter rail service while being
15 unable to attain a significant speed advantage.

16 The southern route will not address service
17 beyond Fresno, eliminating the cities of Merced,
18 Modesto, Stockton, in addition to many of the vacation
19 destinations in the Sierras such as Yosemite National
20 Park, which one day may be connected by inter-mountain
21 rail.

22 On June 27th at the ASR meeting in San Carlos,
23 a list of five hearing sites on the draft EIR was
24 presented which included only Bay Area cities. During
25 the meeting, a request was made by Chair John Pedrozo

PSM5-1
Cont.

PSM5-2

1 of the Merced County Board of Supervisors to conduct an
2 EIR hearing in the Central Valley, which we're at
3 today. Dan Leavitt, HSR Deputy Director, gave a verbal
4 confirmation to schedule that meeting.

5 Although the Merced meeting is welcomed, if a
6 true measure of public sentiment is to be received, the
7 HSR should consider hearings in more San Joaquin Valley
8 cities. I understand Stockton's now included, but
9 certainly it's not the only one -- it should not be
10 limited to that. Bakersfield, Fresno, Modesto are also
11 major players in the San Joaquin Valley -- and a number
12 of others.

13 Anyway, of the meetings now, we have two that
14 are outside the tight-knit group of cities in the Bay
15 Area.

16 The southern section of the High-Speed Rail
17 system offers unique challenges also. Bakersfield from
18 Los Angeles, via Tehachapi, the high desert cities of
19 Lancaster and Palmdale, Saugus, Newhall, the San
20 Fernando Valley and Los Angeles all have a vested
21 interest in the entire HSR route. Palmdale is the
22 future site of an international airport which will
23 supplement Los Angeles International.

24 This will serve much of the Los Angeles area,
25 bringing more passengers into the High-Speed Rail

PSM5-2
Cont.

PSM5-3

1 System. The high desert area has grown considerably,
2 and that growth will continue well into the future.
3 The route will also include the San Fernando Valley and
4 continue into Los Angeles. And all of these population
5 centers along the HSR route have a stake in what we
6 propose upon the entire route.

7 The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors
8 believes that public comment should include all of the
9 areas on the HSR route. It's been over two years since
10 Los Angeles has had a public hearing. The high desert
11 communities should certainly be included also.

12 After a public input process is completed and
13 thoroughly assessed, we believe that a choice between
14 Altamont and Pacheco will show that Altamont is by far
15 the best and only choice to complete the run into the
16 Bay Area.

17 With this outcome, we strongly believe that
18 the High-Speed Rail will become the grand system, that
19 all communities will have had the ability to have a say
20 in its development, and that future generations will
21 enjoy High-Speed Rail benefits within the State of
22 California.

23 Thank you very much.

24 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

25 Next I need to call Santa Clara Valley

PSM5-3
Cont.

1 Transportation Authority, Scott Haywood.

2 An then, Andrew, you'll be next.

3 SCOTT HAYWOOD: It's a pleasure to be here. My
4 name is Scott Haywood. And I am the policy and
5 community relations manager for the Santa Clara Valley
6 Transportation Authority in Santa Clara, California.
7 We are the transit agency and the congestion management
8 agency for Santa Clara County.

9 VTA, or Santa Clara Valley Transportation
10 Authority, strongly supports the concept of High-Speed
11 Rail connecting Northern and Southern California as a
12 way to relieve highway and traffic congestion between
13 the Bay Area and Southern California. VTA also
14 believes that the Pacheco Pass is the one that makes
15 the most sense for the entry point for High-Speed Rail
16 into the Bay Area.

17 In 2005, the California High-Speed Rail
18 Authority Draft Statewide Program EIR/EIS concluded
19 that Pacheco Pass was the better alignment because it
20 provides more frequent service to critical Silicon
21 Valley job markets, which is a primary economic engine
22 for California and the United States as a whole, as
23 well as it more effectively and efficiently meets
24 current and future inter-city rail demand and thus is a
25 better fit for the High-Speed Rail's basic project

PSM6-1

PSM6-2

1 objectives and, finally, does not require a new San
2 Francisco Bay crossing, which would pose considerable
3 environmental challenges, be more costly, and could
4 result in schedule delays.

5 We believe the information presented in the
6 Authority's Draft Bay Area-to-Central Valley High-Speed
7 Rail Program EIR/EIS does nothing to change these
8 original conclusions. The Pacheco Pass alignment would
9 provide faster, more direct, more frequent service to
10 the three largest urban centers in the Bay Area -- San
11 Jose, San Francisco and Oakland.

12 To demonstrate the need for direct high-speed
13 rail service to San Jose, which is the 10th largest
14 city in the nation and the largest in the Bay Area,
15 consider that the Authority Draft Statement Program
16 EIR/EIS estimates that, by 2010, the Mineta San Jose
17 International Airport will have more flights serving
18 the Bay Area-to-Southern California market than Oakland
19 and San Francisco combined.

20 Finally, air traffic between the Bay Area and
21 Southern California will continue to grow. But all
22 three of the major airports in the air Bay Area are
23 constrained for future growth. And the Bay
24 Area-Southern California air traffic corridor is one of
25 the busiest in the nation, and it's only going to get

PSM6-2
Cont.

PSM6-3

PSM6-4

1 worse.

2 Therefore, the project purpose of the
3 High-Speed Rail must be to provide a competitive,
4 long-distance transit alternative between Northern and
5 Southern California, and the Pacheco Pass alignment is
6 the best alternative for serving that purpose.

7 Thank you very much for your consideration.

8 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

9 Andrew, as you make your way up, let me just
10 take a minute here to make an introduction. Board
11 member and former chair of the High-Speed Rail
12 Authority has now joined us, and this is Mr. Rod
13 Diridon.

14 BOARD MEMBER ROD DIRIDON: I apologize to everyone
15 for being tardy. We needed a high-speed train instead
16 of a low-speed car.

17 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Okay. I'd like to
18 introduce Andrew Chesley, Executive Director of the San
19 Joaquin COG.

20 (End of audio tape transcription)

21 ANDREW CHESLEY: Thank you very much, Authority
22 Member Florez. And also good to see you again,
23 Authority Members from yesterday in Gilroy.

24 My name is Andrew Chesley. I'm the executive
25 director of the San Joaquin Council of Governments in

1 Stockton, California. And I want to first off, Rod,
2 say thank you for your scheduling an additional public
3 meeting in Stockton on September 18th, from 4:00 to
4 6:00. We look forward to hosting your attendance at
5 that public meeting.

6 I want to make two points regarding the
7 position of the San Joaquin Council of Governments
8 regarding the selection that you will have to make
9 regarding which is the appropriate route from the San
10 Joaquin Valley into the Bay Area. Our board of
11 directors has adopted a position supportive of the
12 Altamont Pass as the selected route and encourages the
13 Authority to make that selection when you come to make
14 that choice in October or that time frame.

15 One of the primary reasons for our board to
16 advocate that position is this serves more population
17 centers to access of the Bay Area through the Altamont
18 Pass. It offers a Valley connection to the East Bay,
19 and it thus connects to transit services in the Bay
20 Area, such as BART and other Bay Area transit
21 providers.

22 It offers the opportunity to leverage
23 investments in the High-Speed Rail corridor for other
24 rail projects, including the Altamont Commuter Express.
25 And as the Altamont Commuter Express looks to purchase

PSM7-1
Cont.

1 right of way in the Altamont Pass through Livermore
2 Valley for purposes of passenger rail service out
3 there, we have a great opportunity to mesh and
4 synergize the two interests of High-Speed Rail as well
5 as service from the Valley into the Bay Area by the
6 Altamont Commuter Express.

7 This provides first rate High-Speed Rail for
8 San Joaquin and Stanislaus, counties that total 1.5
9 million people, hopefully to provide for those people
10 who reside in Stanislaus and San Joaquin counties.

11 And San Joaquin County is projected to be the
12 fastest growing county in the State of California by
13 the State Department of Finance, with Stanislaus
14 following very close behind in that regard.

15 Our friends from the Bay Area are right to
16 point out that the trip along the Altamont does result
17 in a little bit more travel time to San Jose, about ten
18 minutes. However, other locations in the San Francisco
19 Bay Area are accessed just as quickly by the Altamont
20 Pass as they are by the service through the Pacheco
21 Pass.

22 I think we all agree that the primary purpose
23 behind High-Speed Rail is to connect the State of
24 California from Los Angeles to the Bay Area. And I
25 think that both options that you have before you do

PSM7-1
Cont.

1 that quite well.

2 We are recommending that you look most
3 strongly at the Altamont because we looked at the
4 market studies that you and your -- the folks have done
5 regarding High-Speed Rail. If you look at the
6 L.A.-to-San Francisco market, it ranks eighth in terms
7 of demand for your future riders of High-Speed Rail.

8 The number one and number three markets are
9 the San Joaquin Valley-to-San Joaquin Valley
10 destinations, and the San Joaquin Valley to other
11 destinations being Los Angeles, San Francisco and other
12 points along the future High-Speed Rail.

13 High-Speed Rail succeeds because of the San
14 Joaquin Valley. Without it, High-Speed Rail will not
15 be able to generate the kind of ridership and demand
16 that we know is out there in the State of California
17 and makes this a valuable service.

18 The Altamont Pass alignment, capital costs are
19 roughly the same, will be 1 percent higher than the
20 Pacheco Pass but will produce more ridership and a
21 lower operating cost on an annual basis. These are --
22 actually, there's two new important factors when you
23 look out into the future for the continued operation of
24 the Altamont Pass.

25 The Altamont option alignment is, I think, the

PSM7-1
Cont.

1 best option. And if you look at what's happening in
2 the San Joaquin Valley with the Partnership, the
3 Regional Policy Council, which, Authority Member
4 Florez, you sit on, and you look at the efforts that
5 we're undergoing here in the Valley, the blueprint
6 effort, the San Joaquin Valley is coming together as it
7 never has before. And the great message there is, as
8 we come together, we have identified the Altamont Pass
9 to be the preferred line. And we look forward to your
10 selecting that in your future deliberations.

11 So thank you very much for your consideration.

12 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

13 Before I call up the next speaker, then, we'll
14 make one more introduction. I'd like to, at this time,
15 introduce our executive director Mehdi Morshed, who has
16 joined us.

17 I'd like to call on Carl Pollard from the City
18 of Merced, and then Vince Roos from Congressman Costa's
19 office will go up next.

20 Good evening.

21 I would just like to say that we would like to
22 support the High-Speed Rail coming to our Valley, to
23 the Central Valley here in Merced. And we appreciate
24 that you not only consider us but, because we're right
25 straight in the middle of California, and we're the hub

PSM7-1
Cont.

PSM8-1

1 of this state and like a hub on a wheel, it would be
2 more efficient and more feasible to put that High-Speed
3 Rail hub and maintenance right here in the Valley,
4 right here in the county of Merced.

5 I thank you for your time and appreciate your
6 allowing me to speak.

7 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FLOREZ: Thank you, Carl.

8 VINCE ROOS: Hi. I'm Vince Roos. I'm an ag and
9 water specialist for Congressman Jim Costa. And he
10 wanted me to take this opportunity to give a brief
11 statement. He has already included a letter into the
12 record at the San Jose meeting. He wanted me, first of
13 all, to pass on his greetings to Mehdi.

14 He visited with you yesterday on this very
15 issue.

16 The Congressman, as you know, has been
17 involved with High-Speed Rail for over 15 years, one of
18 the strongest supporters. Besides the water, it's one
19 of the issues that ranks highest on his priority list.
20 He wants to see it come into this Valley.

21 As of this point, he has not stated a position
22 as to the route. He'd rather not view this as one
23 route over another. He would rather the Valley see a
24 vision for maybe both/and.

25 So the Congressman says that he'd like to

1 convey to you the urgency that this -- move forward
2 now. He's especially appreciative that the State
3 legislature, as well as the Governor, continue to
4 include the 15- to \$20 million to keep the High-Speed
5 Rail going.

6 Also, I'm going to kind of echo what Pete
7 Weber said a little bit earlier on, some priorities of
8 his to see going forward is that we continue with the
9 \$9 billion bond to be on the '08 ballot and to
10 encourage the Governor to do that. And he is presently
11 doing that. He also wants to encourage the local folks
12 to step up, knowing that they're going to have to be
13 very much a part of this process to see this actually
14 become a reality, coming through the Valley.

15 And finally, he wanted to pass on that he's
16 working diligently back in Washington. And as it was
17 mentioned, Senator Feinstein, Senator Boxer, he's
18 working closely with them to establish a national
19 high-speed rail authority.

20 There's 11 corridors that have been identified
21 already in the United States. And they're working to
22 put into legislation some authorizing legislation to
23 move forward towards looking at a national approach to
24 high-speed rail.

25 So he just want me to come, again, to

PSM9-1
Cont.

PSM9-2

PSM9-3

1 encourage this process and thank you folks for your
2 diligence.

3 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

4 If I could ask Dr. Lee Snyder from the Fresno
5 Medical Society, and Supervisor Dianne Fritz will be
6 coming up next.

7 DR. LEE SNYDER: Are the students still here? I
8 guess they're gone.

9 May I say first that, if we don't get the
10 rapid transport helping clean up the air, those
11 students are not going to be in this Valley.

12 I have five children. I have one in this
13 Valley. The others have scattered either to the Bay
14 Area or elsewhere in the country. I feel something as
15 a physician, that I'm preaching to the choir.

16 Everyone mentions air quality in passing as
17 they talk about transport. And I've had this
18 experience for the last several years. I've been
19 appearing at a variety of organizational meetings to
20 preach about clean air. And it's more I find over and
21 over again that my main job is to stop talking about
22 business, which I think is very important as a small
23 businessman for 46 years in Fresno, but start talking
24 about human costs.

25 And I think I must, once again, give the

1 statistics, which I'm sure you know very well, about
2 the \$3.2 billion a year that it costs for healthcare
3 services in the valley that we are sitting in.

4 We sit in a bathtub which is covered with foul
5 air. I remember when I first came to this valley. I
6 used to be a little amused in flying from Los Angeles
7 to San Francisco because I said, "Look at the cigar,"
8 which was 99 and the effluvia from the cars on 99.
9 It's no longer funny. I don't consider it as very
10 funny.

11 The thing that bothers me is that we sit and
12 talk about something that will take maybe 20, 25 years
13 to develop at its best. And meanwhile, I'm concerned
14 about children that are being born today, born with
15 respiratory difficulty which they developed in their
16 mother's womb. They have poor air quality when they
17 are born, from which they never really recover
18 completely, though they become functional and good
19 citizens.

20 I'm concerned about schools which have 390,000
21 absent school days because of respiratory illnesses of
22 their children, their students, and the cost to them.
23 I'm concerned about the four of you who are sitting
24 here inhaling the particulate matter which is given off
25 by our foul air, which is affecting your hearts, your

PSM10-2
Cont.

1 lungs, and your brains.

2 All of these things must be highly considered
3 when you're speaking of any mechanism to make transit
4 more rapid, to make air healthy. We -- our statistics
5 tell us that, if we do develop the rapid transit
6 system, that we will take the equivalent of 9 billion
7 tons of carbon dioxide out of the air yearly. That it
8 is the equivalent of 1.7 million automobiles on our
9 highways.

10 Having lived and loved in this valley, I'm
11 especially concerned about the coverage of this valley
12 by any technology which we can develop. As a
13 businessman, I want this valley to be economically
14 healthy. I try to make it that way.

15 I belong to a profession which is probably, if
16 not the first, the second largest economy in this
17 Valley; that is the health industry. I know that we
18 are unable to recruit physicians because of air
19 quality. I know that in Fresno, we have lost three
20 top-notch specialists, leaving our Children's Hospital
21 without a neurosurgeon because their children had
22 asthma and they moved out of the Valley.

23 So I would like to see this Valley, which has
24 special problems, served first or at least
25 expeditiously. But above all, I would like us to plan,

PSM10-2
Cont.

1 not only for ourselves -- but as a grandfather and a
2 great-grandfather, I'm concerned about future
3 generations. Let's plan for them.

4 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you,
5 Dr. Snyder.

6 Dianne Fritz, Supervisor from Mariposa County.
7 Welcome.

8 DIANNE FRITZ: Thank you very much. I want to
9 thank you very much for being here in Merced. I would
10 like for you to, please, if you can at all, schedule
11 more hearings in the San Joaquin Valley. I think that
12 the thoughts and the feelings of the people that live
13 in this Valley are very important for you to hear.

14 We -- Supervisor Aborn and I are two of the
15 new members to the San Joaquin Rail Committee. And if
16 you'd asked me about three or four years ago if I'd
17 ever been interested in rail, I would have said no.
18 But becoming involved and seeing -- we can't build more
19 airports; we can't make them larger. Our freeways are
20 congested. High-Speed Rail is the way of the future.
21 I am a grandmother, and I would love for my children to
22 be able to have that option.

23 We need to join Northern California with
24 Southern California and all the points east and west.
25 High-Speed Rail is our best offer. It will cut the

PSM10-2
Cont.

PSM11-1

PSM11-2

1 pollution. Mariposa County is a small rural county.
2 We're the mother of counties. And we'd like to see
3 this grow.

4 So thank you for your time. And if you can
5 schedule more hearings, perhaps in Bakersfield or
6 Fresno, I'm sure those people would be very, very
7 grateful. Thank you for your time.

8 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

9 I'm going to ask Dr. David Lighthall, and then
10 Mr. Larry Miller will follow.

11 DR. DAVID LIGHTHALL: Hi. I'm a senior scientist
12 at the Central Valley Health Policy Institute at CSU
13 Fresno. And one of the things that I'm interested in
14 in terms of my research and the kind of policy work
15 that we do at the institute is, how can we protect
16 public health in the Valley and at the same time have a
17 sustainable future. And as you know, sustainability is
18 not just environmental health. It's also economic
19 viability and social justice.

20 And I want to just -- again, this is somewhat
21 repetitive, but I think my main argument is something
22 that hasn't necessarily been said specifically. And
23 that is that construction of High-Speed Rail needs to
24 be prioritized in the Valley, in the San Joaquin
25 Valley. Period.

PSM11-2
Cont.

PSM12-1

1 So I'm not going to take a position on the two
2 routes, although I am very much involved with Pete
3 Weber in the San Joaquin Valley Partnership Air Quality
4 Work Group. But that's for a couple of reasons. It's
5 extremely important that the Valley construction be
6 prioritized.

7 And what I say "Valley construction," I'm
8 talking about from Bakersfield to Sacramento. And I
9 know that this is not all going to be done in one
10 particular piece, but that's something I want to go on
11 record as emphasizing here today.

12 We heard Dr. Snyder talk about the estimated
13 \$3.2 billion per year in social costs of air pollution
14 in the San Joaquin Valley. But before I get into that,
15 I think what was very compelling was the statistic that
16 Pete Weber gave. And to underscore my overall point
17 that the estimate, the study estimate, shows 44 percent
18 of the estimated ridership being either in and out of
19 the Valley or within the Valley.

20 We have a special problem here in the Valley
21 in respect to emissions from internal combustion
22 engines, which is our primary mode of transportation
23 currently. The Valley has about the same amount of
24 violations of the ozone standard and the PM2.5 standard
25 as the South Coast Air District. And we consistently

PSM12-1
Cont.

1 rank as Regional Air Basin No. 1 nationally in terms of
2 public health problems in respect to not being able to
3 meet the ozone standards and the PM2.5 standards.

4 But what's interesting and what my research
5 has shown is that there's actually about eight to nine
6 times higher levels of pollution of ozone and PM2.5
7 precursors actually being emitted in Southern
8 California. So they can have about eight times the
9 density of vehicular traffic and still meet their
10 attainment compared to the Valley.

11 So as the Valley is growing now, what we're
12 running up against is we're exceeding our carrying
13 capacity, which is a very limited regional carrying
14 capacity, because of a relatively low dispersion of air
15 pollutants. And this, of course, depends on the
16 weather. But it's a chronic problem here.

17 So what this means, then, as we are struggling
18 now, both with the California Air Resources Board and
19 with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control
20 District to meet the federal EPA ambient air quality
21 standard for ozone, we're now talking about attainment
22 for the Valley being pushed all the way out to 2024,
23 and looking at a price tag of at least \$100 million a
24 year -- probably more than that -- in incentive funds
25 in order to accelerate the turnover of our fleets of

PSM12-1
Cont.

1 people, trucks and cars and so forth. This is above
2 and beyond the health costs that we're already paying.

3 So I don't want to belabor this, but we're
4 also now looking at -- the federal government, it's
5 quite likely, will be lowering or tightening the
6 standards for ozone and for PM2.5. So we're actually
7 going to be looking at an even higher burden.

8 One of the things that's going to make a
9 critical contribution to the Valley being able to
10 accelerate attainment for meeting the national air
11 quality ambient standards for ozone and PM2.5 is going
12 to be High-Speed Rail. There's absolutely no question
13 about it because, when you get out in those out years,
14 every increment that we can gain through some major
15 technological investment that's going to get vehicles
16 off the road is going to make a difference.

17 So I just want to underscore the importance of
18 accelerating or maximizing the actual miles of track in
19 the Valley as soon as possible.

20 Thank you.

21 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

22 Mr. Larry Miller and then Dr. Lee Boese.

23 LARRY MILLER: Good afternoon. It's nice to see
24 you again, Director Morshed, Mr. Diridon -- Member
25 Diridon, Member Florez, and Associate Director

PSM12-1
Cont.

1 Pourvahidi.

2 I would like to speak to one issue in
3 particular and two issues that relate to it. The one
4 issue has been brought up -- I should say, excuse me,
5 Larry Miller. And I'm representing Fresno County on
6 the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee. I'm also a
7 member of the County's Blueprint Committee, and the
8 Fresno County COG Rail Committee.

9 And what I would like to speak to you about
10 first and foremost is the ability to do both routes,
11 since that seems to be the premier topic at hand here.
12 When I say "both routes," that means both accesses to
13 the Bay Area -- Altamont Pass, Los Banos nominally.

14 I want to applaud Mr. Costa's remarks given to
15 you today by his aide. And I want to applaud
16 Mr. Weber's remarks to the same end. And I wanted to
17 remind you that the remarks I'm going to make I also
18 filed as a brief to your original plan. And they are
19 coded [sic] in that plan.

20 And there is a nominal response along both
21 lines of -- to the suggestion. But to be specific, I
22 think it's affordable and eminently feasible to do
23 both. And both need to be done because both sections
24 of the Bay Area have a crying need for access to the
25 rest of the state. And the rest of the state has a

PSM13-1

1 crying need for both of them. And if you are to choose
2 one or the other, you nominate that section as you well
3 know, as essentially the portal to the Bay Area.

4 So now we nominate either the southern part of
5 the bay through San Jose or the East Bay Oakland area
6 as the portal. And either area would be delighted to
7 have that franchise monopoly almost, to be the first
8 point of entry. But to do so almost excludes the
9 others, makes them second class citizens. And I hate
10 to see that.

11 And so for the benefit of both, and for the
12 benefit of riders coming both directions, I think it's
13 feasible to adopt both sections of access. And the
14 reason I can say this is, there is a line of
15 grandfathered rail access running from approximately
16 Lodi to just below Livermore. It has a 1 percent or
17 less grade.

18 This was the original access of the Western
19 Pacific, created over a hundred years ago, well over a
20 hundred years ago. It is already grade separated --
21 not quite abandoned but nearly so. It's owned by the
22 Union Pacific. And it's one of the few sections of
23 track that they would willingly part with without
24 having to be subjected to the issue of eminent domain.
25 At least that was the case a few years ago when I had

PSM13-1
Cont.

1 some discussions with the local managers and directors
2 for infrastructure here on the West Coast.

3 And it's about 42 miles long. And it would be
4 fairly easy to develop that section. You would still
5 have to tie up in Livermore to the BART station, but
6 that increases the value of BART. It increases the
7 amount of integration that High-Speed Rail has with
8 other existing services.

9 Now, I -- I come from a background of the San
10 Joaquins and Amtrak, and you all know that. And I
11 thank both -- I thank all of you for having come to our
12 meetings and spoken to us. And Member Diridon
13 especially, I know you've been very forthcoming with
14 information and sharing and appreciating the fact that
15 these two services need to be optimally integrated.

16 So I want to recommend that you can do this by
17 working with these existing services and then, as
18 future ridership develops, you can develop larger or
19 still different accesses into the Bay Area. It's
20 feasible to do both, and I hope you will look at doing
21 both.

22 And I hope you will look at integrating your
23 services maximally for the benefit of riders,
24 taxpayers, and the State itself. Because the existing
25 infrastructure, although it may not be very desirable --

PSM13-1
Cont.

PSM13-2

1 for example, San Joaquins travel predominantly on
2 tracks owned and operated and dispatched by the BNSF
3 Railroad, which means that, to the extent they can be
4 on time, the BNSF lets them be on time. And I don't
5 think -- the BNSF has been a bad host railroad. And I
6 remember -- and I think, Chairman Diridon, you were on
7 the Authority at the time. And Director Morshed, you
8 were at the meeting as well -- when one of you -- I
9 think it was Dean Flores, who was then a member of the
10 High-Speed Rail --

11 CARRIE POURVAHIDI: It was the Authority.

12 LARRY MILLER: It wasn't the Authority. It was
13 previously.

14 At any rate -- asked, "What kind of service
15 does BNSF give?" and Warren Weber, then the director of
16 CalTrans Division of Rail said, "They give the San
17 Joaquins the same level of service they give
18 themselves, unfortunately."

19 We can never really be on time as long as we
20 don't dispatch our own trains. So that's why you have
21 a tremendous advantage. And the decision to come up
22 the BNSF route made a lot of sense because it's
23 wide-open country. But we're going to end up with a
24 situation -- and I don't think any of you would choose
25 "separate but equal" as a viable means of education

PSM13-2
Cont.

1 [sic]. Certainly the Supreme Court didn't. But we're
2 going to end up with two services lying on top of each
3 other going to largely the same cities. And that's not
4 an efficient use of both.

5 So what I'm going to ask is that you consider
6 working with the San Joaquins to move the Amtrak
7 service off the BNSF route, at least between
8 Bakersfield and Merced, and move it on -- cooperate
9 through this eminent domain process -- onto the Union
10 Pacific.

11 Right now, the BNSF is so oversubscribed that
12 they have roughly twice as many trains. And they're
13 longer trains than they had ten years ago. They have
14 nearly 60 trains a day, so many that they have to
15 furlough in a capacity swap with the Union Pacific
16 between five and ten trains a day. Which is to say
17 that they have to ask their competitors to carry their
18 trains -- not an attractive situation.

19 But there is capacity on the Union Pacific.
20 The Union Pacific, in and of itself, left to its own
21 devices would never, ever surrender that capacity,
22 ever. They'd covet it for perpetuity.

23 But if through this process we can find a way
24 to expand their trackage on an existing route that's
25 grandfathered -- we're not talking about new

PSM13-2
Cont.

1 environmental work, et cetera -- to move the San
2 Joaquins onto that service, we could enfranchise about
3 four times the potential ridership that we now have in
4 the southern San Joaquin.

5 I know this is a meeting about the Bay Area
6 and so forth, but this dovetails with what we're
7 talking about, this level of cooperation, because those
8 will be your passengers too. Those passengers are
9 going to get on in the many cities along the 99
10 corridor. And they're going to change trains in Fresno
11 or Bakersfield, and they're going to get on High-Speed
12 Rail. And they'll then be your passengers.

13 So we could work together expeditiously to
14 enfranchise, by the time this is built, another
15 4 million riders and serve people who have never been
16 served with rail and who pay through their taxes
17 dearly. And this is some of the poorest counties --
18 Tulare County, for example, which has no rail service,
19 is one of the poorest counties in the state; they pay
20 their taxes faithfully and they get no service
21 whatsoever.

22 But by moving the San Joaquins from the BNSF
23 to the Union Pacific corridor, we could enfranchise
24 those people. They could become our riders, and they
25 could become your riders. This makes our service

PSM13-2
Cont.

1 better for working with you, and it makes your service
2 better for working with us.

3 So I hope you'll bear that in mind and take
4 that same position, then, with regard to tying into
5 BART through Livermore along the Western Pacific.
6 Forty-two miles through an existing grade-separated
7 rail line is not a lot in the scope of what you -- no
8 tunneling, no new environmental statements. It's
9 already there; it's operated. I think it makes a lot
10 of sense.

11 So with that in mind, I'd summarize by asking
12 to you think of the symbiosis with these other lines,
13 to think of working with BART as well through
14 Livermore, and also by thinking of working still more
15 with ACE, which is a wonderful service.

16 And I hope that at some point we can end up,
17 despite the territorial disputes -- and there are
18 bureaucratic territorial disputes -- CalTrans and the
19 San Joaquin say nice things about High-Speed Rail and
20 vice versa.

21 And Past Chairman Diridon, you've been
22 wonderful about coming to the meetings and talking with
23 us. But at some point, we've got to really get
24 together so that we can do single ticketing, integrate
25 schedules, have platform-to-platform compatibility. It

PSM13-2
Cont.

1 increases your ridership dramatically and it increases
2 ours.

3 And more importantly, it gives the State of
4 California and its residents and visitors a lot better
5 service, and it costs less.

6 So with that, I conclude. And thank you for
7 the time.

8 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

9 LEE BOESE, JR.: It's good to see my old friends
10 here in Merced. I'm really fortunate that you were
11 able to come here. And I'm even more impressed by the
12 turnout.

13 But I wanted to say hello to Mehdi, Rod, of
14 course, Fran and Carrie, who have all been at it for a
15 long, long time. And if we do get that first train,
16 I'd say the one out of San Jose has got to be the
17 Diridon Express, huh?

18 Dear Rail Authority, I write on behalf of the
19 Merced County High-Speed Rail Committee to respectfully
20 urge you to continue to include Merced as a rail stop
21 and Castle Air Force base as a maintenance and
22 construction hub.

23 The Merced County High-Speed Rail Committee is
24 made up of business people, educators, farmers, and
25 public sector employees. Our mission is to support the

PSM13-2
Cont.

PSM14-1

1 construction of a high-speed line which includes a stop
2 in Merced County. We believe that this project will
3 significantly improve the Valley air quality and
4 transportation needs.

5 Our committee endorses the former Castle Air
6 Force Base as the perfect facility for the construction
7 and maintenance hub of this statewide project. We have
8 long supported construction of a high-speed line
9 connecting Northern and Southern California. Building
10 such a system would dramatically expand the travel
11 options for California's growing population at half to
12 one third of the cost to expand our airports and
13 highways to provide a comparable level of service.

14 It would significantly reduce air pollution
15 and greenhouse gasses and, if done right, will give
16 California an economic shot in the arm by helping to
17 relieve high home prices and rising traffic congestion
18 that's slowly strangling California's economic centers.

19 Lastly, we urge the Authority to continue
20 their arduous task of completing the necessary studies
21 for the State to consider entering into a
22 public-private partnership to finance, build, maintain,
23 and/or operate the High-Speed Rail system.

24 And again, Merced is here for your assistance.
25 Anything we can do for you, you can see, we've got --

PSM14-1
Cont.

PSM14-2

PSM14-3

1 we've been blessed with some outstanding leadership
2 here, the turnout here today.

3 We desperately need High-Speed Rail.

4 Thanks.

5 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

6 We have about 12 speakers yet that would like
7 to make statements. So if I could ask, maybe try to
8 limit yourselves to maybe five minutes. I don't want
9 to cut anybody off. If you have something that must be
10 said, please say it. But just to give you an idea of
11 where we are -- patience, thank you so much for
12 sticking with us thus far.

13 So the next person that I'll call is Charles
14 White and then Dennis Pinion after that.

15 CHARLES WHITE: I'm here representing myself,
16 although I am past president of the Merced County
17 Association of Realtors.

18 I've been a proponent of High-Speed Rail for
19 many years. And I really want to thank the Commission
20 for coming to Merced here. It just makes my day to see
21 you come here.

22 One of the biggest -- these issues have all
23 been discussed. I just want to emphasize one of my
24 important things is air quality improvement. And since
25 UC Merced is here and it will be growing over the next

PSM14-3
Cont.

PSM15-1

PSM15-2

PSM15-3

1 25 or 30 years, I think coming -- having a stop here in
2 Merced is very important, as has already been
3 presented.

4 So I just would hope that you would take the
5 Altamont Pass at this time because there are more
6 people that will be served in the Valley here. I'm not
7 opposed to other routes, but I just think that
8 initially, we need that route. And Castle Air Force
9 Base appears to be a good place for your construction
10 hub.

11 I appreciate you coming, and I want to thank
12 you a lot for coming.

13 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

14 Dennis Pinion, and then we'll have Rod Webster
15 following Dennis.

16 DENNIS PINION: I'm Dennis Pinion. I became
17 interested in High-Speed Rail issues several years ago.
18 And at the time, I was -- I wanted to avoid the
19 creation of a new transportation corridor through
20 Diablo Range. And of course, several years ago, you
21 decided that that would not be the case, that -- and
22 then, we're here today to talk about the routes that
23 are still on the table.

24 To me, the specific route is not the important
25 issue. I don't want to support one route per se over

PSM15-3
Cont.

PSM15-4

PSM15-5

PSM16-1

1 another. What I want to support is the completion of
2 the High-Speed Rail. You know, with the greenhouse gas
3 issues that we have now, global warming and that, it's
4 now becoming very known to the public the problems that
5 we face. And you know, we need to start doing
6 something about those.

7 I'd also like to point out that, a few years
8 ago, I moved to Arnold, California which is on
9 Highway 4 east of Stockton. And if I wanted to go to
10 Los Angeles today, I have a choice of getting in my car
11 and driving to Sacramento Airport, Oakland Airport, San
12 Jose Airport or driving direct to Los Angeles. And so
13 basically, I have no choice but to drive to Los
14 Angeles. And it would be very nice if I could come
15 down to some city along the route between, say,
16 Bakersfield and Sacramento, and pick up the train and
17 take it to Los Angeles instead.

18 So I think that covers my points for now.
19 Thank you.

20 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you very
21 much.

22 After Mr. Webster, we will have Tom Grave.

23 ROD WEBSTER: I'm Rod Webster, representing the
24 Merced group of the Sierra Club. And as we're kind of
25 looking at the feasibility of the different routings

PSM16-1
Cont.

PSM17-1

1 here, I think a factor that really needs to be
2 underscored that is addressed in the EIR is the Pacheco
3 Route, whether it goes 140 or 152, either bisects or
4 comes very close to some very important grasslands, the
5 Grasslands Ecological Area, 160,000 acres, largest
6 wetland complex in California, largest block of
7 continuous wetland in the Central Valley, identified as
8 one of the 22 significant -- most significant wetland
9 areas in the U.S. and also included as a wetland of
10 worldwide importance.

11 There's over a million birds that winter over
12 in that area. There's a quarter million there in the
13 springtime. It's also a wildlife corridor. Indigenous
14 species move, particularly north-south in that area.
15 That includes 47 different species that are either
16 endangered, threatened, or candidates for those
17 classifications. And there's also 550 total species.
18 There's a huge wildlife biodiversity in that area.

19 Looking over the EIR, or just without doing
20 that, considering a train traveling 220 miles an hour on
21 a grade through that area, how can that not compromise
22 that wetlands area? And I'd like to just suggest that
23 neither state nor federal law is likely to allow that.
24 You've got 25-foot electric poles; you've got
25 eight-foot chain-link fences on either side, land

PSM17-1
Cont.

1 berms.

2 Now, in the EIR, there are some mitigations.
3 There can be tunneling, that sort of thing, to try and
4 allow wildlife movement across that train barrier.
5 Those would have some effectiveness but obviously are
6 going to be a compromise -- large animals, potential
7 for large animal collisions on the tracks themselves.
8 And this is even without considering the impacts of
9 things like noise, vibration, shock waves.

10 An additional factor is water quality. You're
11 in a wetlands area during construction. You're going
12 to totally change the drainages in those areas. And it
13 seems to me those would have to be addressed and, at
14 least, mitigated. And I think that's an incredibly
15 ambitious project if Pacheco would be your choice.

16 Clearly I'm here to advocate Altamont as an
17 already-disturbed corridor with eight lines [sic] of
18 freeway and oil pipelines and electrical windmills
19 already in place. And I think it just makes far more
20 sense.

21 I realize there's many factors to consider.
22 People have been voicing those. But this is one factor
23 that I think also needs to be looked at extremely
24 closely before any decision is made. Thank you.

25 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

PSM17-2

PSM17-3

1 We have Tom Grave, and then Ken Gosting will
2 follow.

3 TOM GRAVE: Good afternoon. My name is Tom Grave.
4 I reside in Merced. I'm associated with TIE, which is
5 "Transportation Involves Everyone." Also associated in
6 Merced Alliance Responsible Growth.

7 I want to, first of all, thank you for being
8 in Merced today to hear about what folks in the Central
9 Valley think about and would like to see in the
10 High-Speed Rail Program. So thanks again. By your
11 reactions, it seems like we have a pretty good turnout
12 today compared to what you guys experienced already in
13 the Bay Area. I'm certainly pleased with the nice
14 turnout.

15 I would like to say at the outset, of course,
16 that I believe strongly in the fact that the High-Speed
17 Rail System in this state is vital to its future. I
18 will just state briefly the reasons because I have them
19 written down here. Other people have already said
20 them, but I'll say them quickly: population growth,
21 highway congestion, air pollution, energy use, and
22 crowded airports all support the need to develop this
23 system. So I'm a hundred percent behind that.

24 Concerning the matter before us, the Bay
25 Area-to-Central Valley alignment, may I draw your

PSM18-1

PSM18-2

1 attention to Section 2.5.1 of the Draft EIR/EIS which
2 is titled "High-Speed Train -- HST -- Alignment
3 Alternatives and Station Location Options."

4 And specifically, Page 29, the second full
5 paragraph, it reads as follows:

6 "Proposed High-Speed Train
7 alignment alternatives are generally
8 configured along or adjacent to
9 existing rail facilities instead of
10 creating new transportation corridors.
11 Although a wide range of options have
12 been considered, the Authority's
13 Initial conceptual approach, previous
14 corridor evaluations, and the
15 evaluation conducted as part of this
16 program EIR/EIS have consistently
17 shown a potential for fewer
18 substantial environmental impacts along
19 existing highway and rail facilities
20 than on new alignments through both
21 developed and undeveloped areas.

22 "Though increasing the overall
23 width of existing facilities could
24 have potential impacts on the amount of
25 land disturbed similar to those of

PSM18-2
Cont.

1 creating new facilities, creating new
2 facilities would also introduce
3 potential incompatibility and
4 severance issues in both urban
5 communities and rural settings,
6 including farmlands and open spaces."

7 As far as we're concerned, this tells the
8 whole story about the choice before the Board. That
9 is, the Bay Area-to-Central Valley connection should be
10 along the existing railroad and highway corridor, the
11 Altamont Pass. And the previous speaker delineated
12 very carefully and very well, I thought, the disturbed
13 nature of this corridor.

14 There is no rail corridor in the Pacheco Pass
15 area. I'll provide for the record a rail map of the
16 state of California as evidence to that effect.

17 To construct the High-Speed Rail through
18 Pacheco Pass would have exactly the negative effects
19 listed in the section I just read, namely
20 incompatibility and severance issues in both urban and
21 rural settings.

22 It would not be possible to construct the
23 High-Speed Rail through Pacheco Pass without
24 significantly disturbing or disrupting wetlands, open
25 space, and wildlife habitat. What exists now as a

PSM18-2
Cont.

PSM18-3

1 grasslands ecological area that Mr. Webster just
2 referred to is just a postage-stamp-sized remnant of
3 what used to be something like 4 million-plus acres of
4 contiguous wetlands in this state.

5 This natural resource is valuable to all of
6 us, all of you. It must not be further damaged.

7 Thank you very much.

8 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

9 We'll have Ruth Sellers following Ken Gosting.

10 KEN GOSTING: My name is Kenneth Gosting. I am
11 the executive director of Transportation Involves
12 Everyone. We are based in Merced, San Francisco, and
13 on the periphery of Yosemite, involved in multiple
14 transportation planning projects.

15 I just wanted to congratulate Supervisor
16 Pedrozo, Chairman of the Board for his efforts in
17 joining with us in pointing out the lack of hearings in
18 the Central Valley and also the fact that the Authority
19 moved toward having a hearing in the Central Valley,
20 particularly Dan Leavitt for his work in bringing the
21 hearing to Stockton.

22 We would like to encourage a hearing in
23 Sacramento because they are definitely affected by the
24 alternative choices between the corridors transecting
25 the Diablo Range.

PSM18-3
Cont.

PSM19-1

1 With that, I would like to conclude because of
2 the guidelines; only one person is supposed to speak
3 from each organization. So I waive time.

4 Thank you very much.

5 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

6 If we could have Joe Rivero, City of Atwater
7 after Ruth Sellers, please.

8 RUTH SELLERS: Thank you. I'm Ruth Sellers, and I
9 thank you for you being here.

10 I'm a resident of Mariposa County. And I
11 would just like to recommend that you consider Altamont
12 Pass. And I base that on coming down off my little
13 hill with very little traffic and traveling through the
14 580 and over the Altamont Pass is very definitely the
15 most congested area that I have been in in a long time
16 since moving from Los Angeles.

17 I think that, for one thing, I wondered for 50
18 years why you've been so slow in putting High-Speed
19 Rail through this state. It's definitely way too late.
20 And let's hope we don't find another 50 years before it
21 becomes a real thing.

22 But I believe that my main objective is to
23 recommend the Altamont. I think that you should start
24 from the top and work down to the bottom, to San Diego,
25 and give those people that live in the Bay Area the

PSM19-1
Cont.

PSM20-1

1 opportunity to travel and to pick up those people who
2 live through the Valley. And we know that the growth
3 is in the Valley.

4 And I think to come through the Pacheco Pass
5 and to eliminate those in Modesto, Merced, and so forth
6 and Stockton would be a real disservice to those
7 individuals.

8 And thank you so much.

9 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

10 Following Mr. Rivero, Bill Sanford.

11 JOE RIVERO: I want to thank you, like everybody
12 else has, about being here. When I was a county
13 supervisor and was commissioner -- I believe that
14 Mr. Morshed was one there -- I was the County's
15 representative going to Los Angeles and San Francisco
16 and Fresno.

17 In fact, I don't know if you remember, Easter
18 Monday, the day after Easter, when you had the hearing
19 at the L.A. International Airport, I brought these
20 monstrous Easter baskets of products from Merced County
21 for all of you.

22 But anyway, the City of Atwater has been
23 constantly in favor of the High-Speed Rail as the
24 County of Merced -- everybody up here that has come
25 forward has all -- everybody has been in favor of it.

PSM20-1
Cont.

PSM21-1

1 I don't need to go through that part again.

2 But I do want to tell you, as a city
3 councilman now, as a representative, I want to tell you
4 that right from back in '96 when the city council under
5 Mayor Ken Devoe [phonetic] had a resolution to the
6 committee and then to the Commission, and then under
7 Mayor Rudy Trevino [phonetic] in Atwater, they were in
8 favor of the High-Speed Rail and of the Altamont
9 area -- the line. Okay.

10 And then the mayor of Atwater now, Mayor Joan
11 Faul and her group, we are still in favor of all of
12 this. And so I won't take the time to say what all of
13 these wonderful things that everybody has said.

14 They've all had good things to say, including the
15 gentleman from San Jose. I mean, he has a good reason
16 for having his, you know, feelings of going over the
17 Pacheco like we all favor going over the Altamont.

18 But I do want to say that you people are
19 the -- where you have a little difference than the city
20 councils and the boards of supervisors, when we have a
21 project come before any of us, we have what are known
22 as NIMBY's, "not in my backyard." But you people have
23 the opposite. Everybody wants it.

24 So I will leave this (indicating) with
25 somebody here. The City of Atwater is definitely in

PSM21-1
Cont.

1 favor of it and for all the very reasons that everybody
2 has spoken about.

3 Thank you very much.

4 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

5 Bill Sanford, and then we have Annette Allsup.

6 BILL SANFORD: Good afternoon. Bill Sanford from
7 Atwater, coming as an individual.

8 And I join all the others in expressing
9 appreciation to you all for coming to us today.

10 I wanted to -- I'd hoped that I could express
11 appreciation to your Authority Chairperson Quentin
12 Kopp. I wrote him on August 17th, didn't really expect
13 a reply but did receive a very gracious reply. And
14 there were a couple of sentences which he kind of
15 echoed what I'd said in my letters.

16 And I wanted to let those out this afternoon.
17 He says at one point -- I'll pick up the sentence
18 here -- sorry to -- okay. Here we go.

19 "You may be assured that the decision will
20 based on," quote, "sound science and informed economics
21 and not on the personal preferences of one area's
22 politicians."

23 I appreciated his echoing that that I had said
24 or hoped for. And further down he said, "You will be
25 reassured that careful attention will indeed be

PSM21-1
Cont.

PSM22-1
Cont.

1 conferred upon the notion of saving taxpayer funds."

2 I was glad to hear that. And on that last
3 point, let me suggest the possibility that there might
4 be some saving of taxpayer funds if we can move the
5 main construction closer to Sacramento sooner rather
6 than later. I mean, it's going to go to Sacramento,
7 right? And I think there probably will be savings if
8 we could move further that direction rather than later,
9 which suggests my own personal commitments to Altamont.

10 Thank you.

11 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Following Annette
12 Allsup, we have DeeDee D'Adamo. Thank you.

13 ANNETTE ALLSUP: Hi. My name is Annette Allsup,
14 and live here in Merced. I'm a great proponent of
15 High-Speed Rail. My husband and I went to Europe in
16 June this summer, and we rode some of the best trains
17 in the world. We were gone for a whole month, and we
18 had a fabulous time.

19 It is such a pleasure to jump on a train and
20 not have to worry about driving. You can sit; you can
21 stand or walk; you can eat; you can read or sleep. And
22 the view is always fascinating.

23 I'm originally from the East Bay area, but
24 I've lived here in Merced for 25 years. Because many
25 of my family still live in the Bay Area, I have driven

1 the Altamont Pass countless time. I have also driven
2 the Pacheco Pass on trips to the coast. It seems so
3 obvious which route should be selected. Altamont.

4 The cut-away through the Coast Range is huge.
5 There's already a rail corridor, and more Valley towns
6 will be served by choosing that route.

7 Another reason I'm a proponent of the Altamont
8 is that there are far fewer animals and habitat that
9 will be disrupted because the freight trains already go
10 there. The only reason Pacheco is even being
11 considered is because of special interest groups
12 wanting to make a buck, lots of bucks. But that reason
13 just isn't good enough, especially when it excludes all
14 of the communities from Merced, north to Sacramento,
15 and west to San Francisco.

16 Please endorse the Altamont. It's the safest
17 and the smartest choice.

18 Thank you.

19 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

20 DeeDee, you, and following, then, we're going
21 to have a student body from UC Merced.

22 And I won't say your name. You can say it to
23 me because I don't know if I'll say it correctly.

24 DEEDEE D'ADAMO: Good evening, Honorable Board
25 Members and staff. Thank you so much for being here in

PSM23-1
Cont.

PSM24-1

1 Merced, and also thank you for committing to holding
2 another hearing in the San Joaquin Valley in Stockton.

3 My name is DeeDee D'Adamo. And I am a board
4 member to the Governor's Partnership for the San
5 Joaquin Valley. I'm also a board member to the
6 California Air Resources Board, and I serve as senior
7 policy advisor to Congressman Cardoza. But you heard
8 from someone else on our staff, so I'll be limiting my
9 comments with regard to some issues that the
10 Partnership is working on.

11 The Partnership really was an outgrowth from
12 several efforts underway in the San Joaquin Valley to
13 pull together the region to focus on issues of
14 commonality to the various counties throughout the San
15 Joaquin Valley.

16 And several years ago, the Valley
17 Congressional Delegation joined together to put
18 together a request into the Congressional Research
19 Service to look at some indicators in the San Joaquin
20 Valley. And that report came out, I believe, about
21 five years ago and underscored many things that we all
22 already know. And that is that this is the most
23 under-served region of the state. In fact, if we look
24 at the entire nation, it's one of the most under-served
25 regions in the nation in terms of educational

1 opportunity, economic opportunity, the highest -- some
2 of the highest unemployment rates in the nation, our
3 healthcare system, our transportation system.

4 And so virtually across the board on
5 indicators, we are a tremendously under-served region.
6 And so the Governor, in follow-up to this study that
7 came out, appointed the Governor's Partnership for the
8 San Joaquin Valley. And we had a meeting a couple of
9 weeks ago in Hanford. And Mr. Morshed and
10 Ms. Pourvahidi were there and did a really wonderful
11 presentation. Board Member Florez was there, and it
12 was just a terrific opportunity for many of us on the
13 board to hear about the exciting opportunity to bring
14 High-Speed Rail to California.

15 And I believe you heard from other officials
16 from the Partnership, so I don't want to go into
17 detail -- just on two points, and that is to say that
18 we all felt very strongly about the importance of
19 linking the Valley from Bakersfield to Sacramento, very
20 important for all of those reasons that I just talked
21 about in terms of this region being so terribly
22 under-served and then, also, linking the Valley to the
23 rest of the State

24 And since I'm a board member of the Air
25 Resources Board, I would just like to point out in

PSM24-2
Cont.

PSM24-3

1 particular some of the big benefits that we think we
2 can see with High-Speed Rail in the Valley. I just
3 came from a meeting in Fresno where we are struggling
4 to find every ton of reduction that we can for this
5 region. We have some of the worst air in the nation,
6 the highest asthma rates in nation, and this region was
7 just bumped up to an extreme non-attainment
8 classification.

9 And when we see that your own figures show
10 that 41 percent of the ridership will come from this
11 region, it doesn't take a lot to figure out the math,
12 that it's really going to help us in our quest to
13 improve air quality.

14 So I would like to thank you for coming here,
15 thank you for the hard work that you're doing on this
16 project, and pledge through the Partnership to work
17 closely with you. We'd like to give you -- lend our
18 resources.

19 And also at the California Air Resources
20 Board, we have top staff that can help you in your air
21 quality analysis. I know that the local district is
22 interested in helping as well. So anything that you
23 need to bolster those air quality benefits, we pledge
24 to support this project and work closely with you.

25 Thank you very much for being here.

PSM24-3
Cont.

PSM24-4

1 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

2 And now we have the student body president
3 from UC Merced.

4 And I'll let you introduce yourself.

5 UDAY BALI: Thank you.

6 Hello, I'm Uday Bali.

7 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Oh, I had it.

8 UDAY BALI: In fact, that's the abbreviated form.
9 It's actually Uday De Bali [phonetic].

10 I'm the Student Body President at UC Merced.
11 And some of my other students and I are here to show
12 the importance of having the High-Speed Rail come to
13 Merced County and the neighboring regions. We did miss
14 a few classes to be here, so it is something really
15 important and near and dear to our hearts.

16 Personally, being an environmental engineering
17 major, I do understand that the High-Speed Rail over
18 here would really help the air quality and reduce air
19 pollution. And originally, being from New Delhi,
20 India, we just built a high-speed rail called the Metro
21 over there and considerably reduced the air pollution
22 over there, congestion, and transit time.

23 So I do understand the importance of having
24 this High-Speed Rail come up in this region because
25 these are the issues that we face in the Valley too.

PSM25-1

1 And we really need to address those.

2 UC Merced, it will help attract more students
3 and help existing students to go home over the weekends
4 and over the holidays rather than waiting for other
5 students to bring back turkey for them.

6 So I have a lot of friends ranging from L.A.
7 to Bay Area who love to go home every weekend, so it
8 would really help them go back. And we are going to
9 grow; our student body is going to grow over the next
10 few years. So it would be a real beneficial factor
11 over there.

12 I am also from Modesto, where my parents are.
13 So it would really help me make it more efficient and
14 cheaper for me to go back home a lot more, and my
15 parents would get to see me more often.

16 Lastly, not taking too much of your time, I
17 believe it will also help the development of this area
18 that UC Merced has started, and along with the
19 High-Speed Rail, it will really help develop the
20 neighboring regions: Merced, Modesto, and the Central
21 Valley.

22 Thank you.

23 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

24 Next speaker is Rick Osorio, and then our last
25 speaker is Trevor Albertson.

PSM25-1
Cont.

1 RICK OSORIO: Good evening. Thank you for
2 allowing me to speak. I'm Rick Osorio, and I'm
3 speaking as a resident of Merced. And I just wanted to
4 encourage you -- other people may tell to you use this
5 route or that route. Obviously I live in Merced, so
6 you know which route I want it to come through. I
7 don't want to have to go south to go north, or go north
8 to go south.

9 So anyway -- but the thing is, we need to --
10 on this train here, this High-Speed Rail, I wish you
11 would change it to the "Freedom Train," because this
12 train is a freedom train for everyone. It would solve
13 some of our air pollution problems and give our kids
14 the freedom to breathe clean air again. So that's
15 important to us. And it would also give our seniors
16 the ability to have the freedom to breathe clean air.

17 It will also help our health for all our
18 citizens and therefore, with the limited doctors and
19 hospitals that we have in our community, it would mean
20 healthier citizens.

21 The infrastructure in the Valley is very poor
22 because we're a poor community. So the infrastructure
23 of a High-Speed Rail would encourage other
24 infrastructures to be built. It would also prevent our
25 towns from growing too big because now people could go

PSM26-1

1 to and from the Bay Area or Southern California and go
2 to work.

3 Right now, the pollution from the vehicles
4 going back and forth two or three hours to the Bay Area
5 to get a high-paying job is very stressful. So our
6 divorce rate would go down; families would be closer
7 together; it will almost be a Garden of Eden again.
8 I'm just trying to give you guys a little balance when
9 everybody says "yes" and "no."

10 And then on the other part is that I would
11 like to see -- I'm right there at the edge of the Baby
12 Boomers. And I would like to see this train built
13 before I get too old to take it. And I'm sure
14 everybody else would.

15 And the other thing is, you're missing a great
16 opportunity to have enough money to pay for that train
17 because these Baby Boomers are going to be the
18 majority. And they've got cash to spend. And their
19 kids all live in the Bay Area and Southern California.
20 so I ask you, change this, and be bold. Like
21 Jack-In-The-Box says, "Be Bold," and go after that
22 bond, and get it. And then, if you don't have enough
23 friends up there, we'll give you the network. We'll be
24 your Verizon. The network is here. We'll be behind
25 you, and we'll see that the legislature moves forward

PSM26-1
Cont.

1 for you.

2 God bless you guys.

3 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

4 Trevor Albertson.

5 Trevor, you're not last, though.

6 TREVOR ALBERTSON: How the heck do I follow that
7 anyways, right?

8 You know, I have to apologize. I'm sorry I
9 didn't have a chance to better prepare my comments.
10 I've been on Reserve duty for a month, and I just found
11 out about this the other day. But I did want to come
12 and say my piece. I don't represent a single person or
13 group here, other than myself. And I need to say that
14 because there's some folks that might assume that is
15 such.

16 I'm a Ph.D. student up at UC Merced. I'm a
17 historian, which means I couldn't find a job doing
18 something else. And for a minute, I just wanted to
19 take the historian's perspective here and talk about
20 why this needs to happen with all due diligence
21 immediately.

22 And on your brochure you pointed out that, you
23 know, "Locomotives and the Intercontinental Railroad
24 brought commerce to California. How wrong could we be?
25 High-Speed trains will bring a stronger, more efficient

PSM26-1
Cont.

PSM27-1

1 economy and nearly half a million new jobs." I bet it
2 will. And, "High-Speed trains offer a way forward."
3 That is the truth.

4 California was well developed before the
5 Transcontinental Railroad got here. It simply
6 developed everything in between. L.A. and San
7 Francisco are the destinations; we are everything in
8 between. It took about four or five years of dedicated
9 building to build that Transcontinental Railroad.
10 Let's hope it doesn't take 25 years to get this built.

11 And I point that out for three simple reasons.
12 And I'm going to go through them -- well, more than
13 three.

14 You've got populations shifts. There is
15 simply no natural impediment to building here in
16 Central Valley. They're not building any new property
17 in the Bay Area. People will move here. This will
18 enable them to live and work here or in the Bay Area.

19 You've got the Boomers retiring. They will
20 continue to retire in the hills. The Highway 4 and 120
21 and 108 corridors are growing like crazy. And there's
22 new Californians coming in, whether those be immigrants
23 from out of the country or immigrants from other
24 states, which many Californians call "out of the
25 country."

PSM27-1
Cont.

1 Now, why is that important? We've got all
2 these folks coming in. Well, it's going to influence
3 the lifestyle and the way in which we live. As time
4 passes, people will choose not to take rail but to
5 continue to fly and continue to drive and to continue
6 to clog the roadways. That's why this needs to happen
7 sooner rather than later.

8 And the way people settle and the resources
9 they use will also be influenced by whether High-Speed
10 Rail is here now or later.

11 So all I'm going to ask is please bring it.
12 We'd love to have you. And bring it as fast as
13 possible.

14 Thank you.

15 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

16 Our last speaker is Joanne Clarke.

17 JOANNE CLARKE: Hi. I live at 2823 North Oleander
18 in Merced. And I currently work in Turlock. I commute
19 to work every day. It's 28 miles one way.

20 I see the same people, every day, commuting up
21 99 north from Merced. And I suspect they come as far
22 south as Chowchilla, Madera.

23 I am a proponent for the Altamont Pass
24 corridor for the High-Speed Rail because I feel that we
25 need transportation, mass transportation, through the

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Cont.

PSM28-1

1 Valley.

2 There are many reasons that the Altamont Pass
3 corridor would be better. Number one, it would allow
4 more transport through the Valley, linking the smaller
5 towns with the larger towns, all the way up into
6 Sacramento. And it would give us a link from the
7 Valley to San Francisco and to L.A. without driving
8 over Altamont Pass.

9 I feel that the Pacheco Pass route will be a
10 detriment to our wildlife refuges that are there. It
11 will create sprawl that does not already exist there.
12 I believe that having the High-Speed Rail go through
13 the Valley will eliminate some of the sprawl that's
14 occurring here and improve the density of our small
15 towns that the rail will go through.

16 Now, I understand that this is a high-speed
17 rail, and it's not expected to stop at every little
18 town along the way. But I believe that having it go
19 this route will allow for connector links, maybe light
20 rail to connect with. The Bay Area, the Peninsula
21 already have CalTrain. They have BART. They have any
22 number of connector links that can link in with the
23 High-Speed Rail system that already exists. The Valley
24 does not.

25 We have Amtrak that comes through the Valley

PSM28-1
Cont.

1 but it does not stop at every station. I researched
2 commuting on Amtrak to Turlock. Amtrak does not even
3 stop in Turlock, so it's not even an option for me.

4 I think that having a rail that can connect
5 us, we commuters, with the High-Speed System and with
6 the smaller system linked to the smaller towns up and
7 down the Valley will eliminate the terrible traffic we
8 have on Highway 99, and perhaps it would allow for the
9 trucking that needs that freeway.

10 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

11 And now it's really, really the last speaker.
12 I know I have said that three times, but -- Carolyn
13 Vara.

14 CAROLYN VARA: I'm really excited about all of the
15 discussion of High-Speed Rail because it's long
16 overdue. I'm a kindergarten teacher at a school that
17 is adjacent to Highway 99. We get lots of pollution.
18 We have lots of kids with asthma, lots of absences. My
19 own daughter suffers terribly from asthma. My son, who
20 lives in the San Diego area, doesn't. He gets the nice
21 breezes, and so he doesn't have the polluted air that
22 we breathe every day.

23 So the sooner we get the High-Speed Rail
24 through the Valley, the better we will all be. And it
25 needs to connect the cities through the center of the

PSM28-1
Cont.

PSM29-1

1 San Joaquin Valley. And we will be seeing a lot more
2 people coming to UC Merced, not only as students and
3 faculty, but we will be hosting a lot of conferences
4 with professional people coming, and we would like to
5 see those people be able to come to Merced on the
6 High-Speed Rail so they don't have to commute long
7 distances from Southern California, the Bay Area.

8 Our airline system isn't great here in the
9 Valley, so we really need to capitalize on High-Speed
10 Rail and get it up to Sacramento and bring it all the
11 way to the Valley. And the sooner, the better.

12 Thank you.

13 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you.

14 And I would like to take this opportunity to
15 say thank you for everyone who came here today to
16 listen and to speak and also offer Mr. Diridon an
17 opportunity speak if he would like.

18 BOARD MEMBER ROD DIRIDON: Only to say -- I'll
19 only say that I apologize, again, for being tardy, that
20 I've been here before, as Supervisor Miller noted, and
21 I appreciate the opportunity of coming back.

22 I really appreciate all of your strong
23 universal support for the High-Speed Rail Program, and
24 I hope we all have an opportunity to vote on those
25 bonds in November of 2008. And we'll be very studious

1 and careful about looking at the data and looking at
2 your comments from this hearing and the other hearing
3 as we finally make our decision, probably in late
4 October, on the route to connect the Central Valley and
5 the Bay Area.

6 And thank you again for making us so welcome
7 and for hosting us so nicely. A special appreciation
8 to Fran for her chairing this meeting and for her long
9 leadership within the High-Speed Rail Authority Board.

10 VICE-CHAIRPERSON FRAN FLOREZ: Thank you everyone.
11 And we'll close the public hearing.

12 (Whereupon, the proceedings concluded
13 at 5:55 o'clock p.m.)

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1 STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
2 COUNTY OF MARIN) ss.

3 I, DEBORAH FUQUA, a Certified Shorthand
4 Reporter of the State of California, do hereby certify
5 that the foregoing proceedings, including the
6 audio-taped portion, were reported by me, a
7 disinterested person, and thereafter transcribed under
8 my direction into typewriting and is a true and correct
9 transcription of said proceedings.

10 I further certify that I am not of counsel or
11 attorney for either or any of the parties in the
12 foregoing proceeding and caption named, nor in any way
13 interested in the outcome of the cause named in said
14 caption.

15 Dated the 13th day of September, 2007.

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DEBORAH FUQUA
CSR NO. 12948