



900 Paramount Road
Oakland Ca 94610
November 16, 2007

Quentin L. Kopp, Chair
California High Speed Rail Authority

Subject: Altamont versus Pacheco

Dear Chairman Kopp:

You were quoted in the San Francisco Chronicle as saying that you would respond only to facts. That's good....provided you get the facts. But you're not getting the facts.

According to the Chronicle, on November 14th, you and other members of the Authority were presented with the following key points in support of the Pacheco recommendation. You were apparently told that:

- A.) Altamont would: "Require branch tracks and splitting service to reach Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose...."
- B.) Altamont would: "Necessitate construction of a costly and undoubtedly controversial new transbay bridge or tube"
- C.) Altamont would: "Involve running four to six tracks through populated areas of the Tri-Valley, probably requiring homes to be 'seized' by eminent domain and construction of elevated tracks"
- D.) Altamont would: "Require construction in sensitive wetlands areas"

A is false. There are no plans for...nor any anticipated funds for...(nor much need for)...bringing high-speed trains to Oakland. (Long Beach is much bigger than Oakland; yet no one talks of running high-speed trains to Long Beach) As far as the splitting of train service is concerned, it's done routinely on several European high-speed systems.

B is misleading. A Dumbarton rail bridge is already in the planning stages. The design of this bridge could be modified to accommodate HSR. While the structure might be "costly", the overall cost of the Altamont

Alternative is actually lower than that of the Pacheco Alternative. You've been told the bridge would be controversial. Would it? Why then have all the environmental groups have lined up behind the Altamont Alternative?

C sets up straw men, convenient for knocking down. Except at stations, there would never be more than four tracks, two for freight service and two for passenger service. At Stations there would probably be two additional tracks. That's not the same as "four to six tracks through populated areas...". The phrase "seized by eminent domain" is equally inappropriate. Properties acquired by eminent domain aren't seized, they're bought, at fair market value. And elevated tracks are avoidable.

D is also misleading. Environmental groups uniformly support Altamont because they are aware that the impact of a high-speed rail line on the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge would be both moderate and "mitigatable". The impact that the Pacheco Alternative would have on the San Joaquin Wetlands Area would be much larger and far more troublesome.

So far the Authority is unfortunately not getting the facts.



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cc San Francisco Chronicle