

Comment Letter O030

08/26/2004 01:32 FAX 323 550 8870

TONY SCUDELLARI

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O030

08/26/2004 01:32 FAX 323 550 8870

TONY SCUDELLARI

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GLASSELL PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
PO Box 65881 Los Angeles, CA 90065 www.GPIA.com

26 AUGUST 2004

MEHDI MORSHED, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
C/O 925 L STREET, STE. 1425
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(FX 916 322-0827)

BETTY MONRO, ACTING ADMINISTRATOR
FEDERAL RAILROAD ADMINISTRATION
US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
1120 VERMONT AVENUE, NW M/S 20
WASHINGTON, DC 20590
(FX 202-493-6009)

RE: DRAFT CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN (HST) DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIR/EIS) SCH 2001042045

DEAR MR. MORSHED & MS. MONRO:

IT HAS COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT THE ABOVE-REFERENCED HAS AMONG ITS PROPOSED ALIGNMENTS, THE POSSIBILITY OF THE HST GOING THROUGH THE PARKS IN "THE CORNFIELD" LOCATED IN LOS ANGELES' CHINATOWN AND TAYLOR YARD LOCATED IN NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES. ONE OF THE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES IS THE LOS ANGELES NEIGHBORHOOD OF GLASSELL PARK, WHICH IS WHERE I RESIDE.

I WOULD LIKE TO REGISTER THE FOLLOWING VERY STRONG OBJECTIONS ON THIS ISSUE:

1) THERE HAS BEEN NO EFFORT TO INFORM THE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL. AS PRESIDENT OF THE GLASSELL PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION AND SOMEONE WHO IS ACTIVELY INVOLVED WITH THE GLASSELL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL, THERE HAS BEEN ABSOLUTELY NO OUTREACH TO OUR COMMUNITY ON THIS MATTER. IN FACT, I JUST FOUND OUT ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL LATE YESTERDAY - AND PUBLIC COMMENT MUST BE MADE BY 31 AUGUST. AND, HAVING A CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH ACTIVISTS IN OUR NEIGHBORING COMMUNITIES, I CAN TELL YOU THAT THEY, TOO, HAVE NOT BEEN INFORMED ABOUT THIS PROPOSAL.

2) THE NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY OF THE DRAFT PROGRAM EIR/EIS IS INSUFFICIENT. TWO OF THE COMMUNITIES THAT WILL BE DIRECTLY AFFECTED REGARDING THE PROPOSED ALIGNMENT(S) THROUGH TAYLOR YARD ARE CYPRESS PARK AND GLASSELL PARK. THESE COMMUNITIES HAVE A PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY POPULATION AND A LARGE PERCENTAGE OF LOW-INCOME RESIDENTS. THESE RESIDENTS ARE NOT BEING NOTIFIED DURING THIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS AND ARE BEING SLIGHTED.

3) BECAUSE OF THIS LATE NOTIFICATION, THERE IS A GLARINGLY APPARENT INABILITY OF THE AFFECTED COMMUNITIES TO REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS AND TECHNICAL APPENDICES AS WELL AS THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD, WHICH I AM SURE ARE EXTENSIVE. OUR

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DRAFT CA HST DRAFT PROGRAM EIR/EIS SCH 2001042045 (CONT'D)

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COMMUNITIES HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO REVIEW THESE CRUCIAL ITEMS NOR HAVE THE COMMUNITIES HAD A CHANCE TO PROVIDE INPUT OF ANY KIND.

4) THE CORNFIELD AND TAYLOR YARD NEED SIGNIFICANT ANALYSIS PER SECTION 4(F) OF THE DOT ACT OF 1966 AND IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTIONS AND ALIGNMENTS ARE PROPOSED TO THE ALIGNMENT(S) THAT INCLUDE THE CORNFIELD AND/OR TAYLOR YARD. UNFORTUNATELY, BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT, THE TECHNICAL APPENDICES NOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD, WE HAVE NO IDEA IF THIS HAS BEEN ADDRESSED.

5) THE CORNFIELD HAS SIGNIFICANT CULTURAL RESOURCES THAT REQUIRE BOTH A 4(F) ANALYSIS AND IS ALSO SUBJECT TO CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT (CEQA), SECTION 15064.5. FOR EXAMPLE, LOCATED WITHIN THE CORNFIELD IS THE "MOTHER DITCH" FROM WHICH EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES - THE BIRTHPLACE OF LOS ANGELES - USED AS ITS WATER SUPPLY. THIS HAS GREAT SIGNIFICANCE TO THE HISTORY OF THE WHOLE CITY OF LOS ANGELES. BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT, THE TECHNICAL APPENDICES NOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD, WE HAVE NO IDEA IF THIS HAS BEEN ADDRESSED SUFFICIENTLY.

7) AGAIN, BECAUSE WE HAVE NOT SEEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT, THE TECHNICAL APPENDICES NOR THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD, WE HAVE NO IDEA IF THE ISSUES OF AESTHETICS, AIR QUALITY, BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES, GEOLOGY AND SOILS, HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS, HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY, LAND USE & PLANNING, NOISE, PUBLIC SERVICES, RECREATION, TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC, UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS OR ANY OTHER MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE AS OUTLINED IN CEQA HAVE BEEN ADEQUATELY ADDRESSED.

8) FUNDAMENTALLY, THE PROPOSED ALIGNMENT(S) THAT POTENTIALLY WOULD GO THROUGH THE CORNFIELD AND TAYLOR YARD IS/ARE JUST PLAIN WRONG. COMMUNITY MEMBERS, ACTIVISTS AND MANY ELECTED OFFICIALS WORKED VERY HARD OVER THE COURSE OF MANY YEARS TO BRING THESE OPEN SPACES TO THE CHINATOWN AND NORTHEAST LOS ANGELES COMMUNITIES. THIS IS A SLAP IN THE FACE TO THOSE WHO HAVE WORKED SO HARD TO GAIN OPEN SPACE FOR THESE DENSELY POPULATED, URBAN, HIGHLY UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES THAT ARE PREDOMINANTLY MINORITY AND LOWER INCOME.

I WOULD LIKE TO RECOMMEND THAT THE FOLLOWING STEPS BE TAKEN ON THE ABOVE ISSUES BEFORE ANYTHING PERTAINING TO THE HST PROCEED:

A.) THERE NEEDS TO BE AT LEAST A SIXTY (60) DAY PERIOD FOR OUR COMMUNITIES AND ANY OTHERS THAT WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE HST TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO PROPERLY REVIEW THE ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT AND TECHNICAL APPENDICES ALONG WITH THE ADMINISTRATIVE RECORD.

B.) THE COMMUNITIES AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED ALIGNMENTS MUST HAVE A DIRECT LINE OF COMMUNICATION WITH THOSE PLANNING THIS HST BECAUSE OF THE IMPACT THIS PROPOSED PROGRAM WILL HAVE ON OUR COMMUNITIES.

C.) BECAUSE THIS PROJECT IS OF STATEWIDE IMPORTANCE, AT A MINIMUM, THERE SHOULD BE EXTENSIVE PUBLIC OUTREACH ON THIS ISSUE. THIS SHOULD INCLUDE WELL PUBLICIZED PUBLIC HEARINGS THROUGHOUT THE LOS ANGELES AREA IN THE COMMUNITIES ALONG EACH OF THE PROPOSED ALIGNMENTS.

D.) THIS ISSUE MUST BE BROUGHT BEFORE THE NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCILS IN THE CITY OF LOS ANGELES, ESPECIALLY THOSE THAT ARE AFFECTED BY THE HST SO THAT SIGNIFICANT STAKEHOLDER INPUT CAN BE HEARD ON THIS CRUCIAL MATTER.

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U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Railroad Administration

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TONY SCUDELLARI

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DRAFT CA HST DRAFT PROGRAM EIR/EIS SCH 2001042045 (cont'd)

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I ASK THAT THE ABOVE RECOMMENDATIONS BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION AND BE IMPLEMENTED BEFORE THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN PROPOSAL PROCEEDS ANY FURTHER.

I THANK YOU IN ADVANCE FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION. I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU.

SINCERELY,



TONY SCUDELLARI, PRESIDENT
GLASSELL PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION

VIA MAIL AND FAX

CC: NORMAN Y. MINETA, US DEPT OF TRANSPORTATION (FX: 202 366-7202)
FRA REGION 7 OFFICE (FX: 916 498-6548)
GOVERNOR ARNOLD SCHWARZENNEGER (FX: 916 445-4633 / 213 897-0319)
SENATOR DIANNE FEINSTEIN (FX: 202 226-3954 / 415 393-0710)
SENATOR BARBARA BOXER (FX: 202 224-3553 / 213 894-5042)
CONGRESSMAN XAVIER BECERRA (FX: 202 225-2202 / 213 483-1429)
STATE SENATOR GIL CEDILLO (FX: 916 327-8817 / 213 612-9591)
STATE SENATOR JACK SCOTT (FX: 916 324-7543 / 626 793-5803)
STATE SENATOR KEVIN MURRAY (FX: 916 445-8899 / 310 641-4395)
SPEAKER FABIAN NUÑEZ (FX: 916 319-2046 / 213 620-4646)
ASSEMBLYMEMBER JACKIE GOLDBERG (FX: 916 319-2145 / 323 258-3807)
ASSEMBLYMEMBER CAROL LIU (FX: 916 319-2144 / 626 577-286)
ASSEMBLYMEMBER JENNY OROPEZA (FX: 916 319-2155)
MAYOR JAMES K. HAHN (FX: 213 978-0656)
COUNTY SUPERVISOR GLORIA MOLINA (FX: 213 613-1739)
COUNCILMEMBER ERIC GARCETTI (FX: 213 613 0819 / 323 913-4474)
COUNCILMEMBER ED F. REYES (FX: 213 465-8907 / 213 485-8908)
COUNCILMEMBER ANTONIO VILLARAIGOSA (FX: 213 547-0680 / 213 485-8788)
RUTH COLEMAN, DIRECTOR OF PARKS AND RECREATION (FX: 916 654-6374)
JOSEPH PETRILLO, CA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY (FX: 916 322-0827)
CA STATE CLEARINGHOUSE (FX: 916 323-3018)
CA DEP'T OF WATER RESOURCES, DPLA UNIT So. DIST. (FX: 818 543-4604)
MIKE CHRISMAN, CA RESOURCES AGENCY (FX: 916 653-8102)
THE LOS ANGELES TIMES (FX: 213 237-7679)
CENTER FOR LAW IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST (FX: 310 314-1957)
NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL (FX: 310 434-2399)
COMMISSIONER CAROL JACQUES, EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES
COMMISSIONER DALILA SOTELO, EL PUEBLO DE LOS ANGELES
ANAHUAK YOUTH SOCCER ASSOCIATION
ARROYO SECO NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
GLASSELL PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
GREATER CYPRESS PARK NEIGHBORHOOD COUNCIL
FRIENDS OF CYPRESS PARK IMPROVEMENT ASSOCIATION
MT. WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION
MT. WASHINGTON HOMEOWNERS ALLIANCE
NORTHEAST OPEN SPACE COALITION



**Response to Comments of Tony Scudellari, President, Glassell Park Improvement Association, August 26, 2004
(Letter O030)**

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Public outreach efforts, consistent with CEQA and NEPA were made for this programmatic document. A description of the outreach efforts including a listing of the public meetings held as part of this program environmental process can be found in Chapters 8 (Public and Agency Involvement) and 9 (Organization, Agency and Business Outreach). The Glassell Park Improvement Association will be added to the distribution list for future information and announcements regarding the project. All notices and information will be sent to:

Tony Scudellari, President
Glassell Park Improvement Association
P.O. Box 65881 [verify – it was illegible on the comment letter]
Los Angeles, California 90065

The noticing of the availability of the Draft Program EIR/EIS was consistent with state and federal law. Please refer to Chapters 8 and 9 for a description of the noticing of the document.

The Cornfield and Taylor Yard Properties are included and addressed in the Final Program EIR/EIS and would be subject to a detailed 4(f) analysis during project level environmental review. The subsequent project level analysis will identify further avoidance and minimization measures, as well as identification of specific mitigation, if impacts cannot be avoided. The Authority has identified the MTA/Metrolink alignment, which avoids Cornfield property, as the preferred alignment. Between Burbank and Los Angeles Union Station, the MTA/Metrolink alignment refers to a relatively wide corridor within which alignment variations will be studied at the project level. This alignment was selected, in part, because it would have fewer potential effects on both the Cornfield Property and the Taylor Yards.

Please see standard response 6.24.2.

Comment Letter O031



O031

Visalia Economic Development Corporation

18 August 2004



Mehdi Morshed
Executive Director
California High-Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Ste. 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments

Dear Mr. Morshed:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Program level EIR/EIS relative to the High-Speed Rail service proposed for the State of California. The Visalia Economic Development Corporation endorses this proposal and encourages the Authority and the State of California to continue moving forward with an ultimate goal of the earliest possible implementation.

Relative to the Draft EIR/EIS, the Visalia EDC wishes to comment on the potential alignment selected by the Authority through the central and southern portion of Central Valley. Specifically, we encourage the Authority to recommend that the final alignment of the service follow that of the Union-Pacific corridor and Highway 99. Visalia continues to be the retail, commercial, and population hub of the area encompassed by Tulare, Kings, and Southern Fresno counties. Selecting the UP alignment ensures the High-Speed Rail will have access to the greatest possible number of users at the lowest cost. It is our understanding that this alignment also represents the most economical option in terms of construction costs. Finally, it is our belief that this alignment represents the option with the greatest potential for positive environmental impacts (e.g. reduced auto emissions, etc.) because of the proximity of a Tulare County station to existing population centers (e.g. shorter driving distances to access trains).

While encouraging adoption of the UP alignment, we recognize that mitigation will be required to address the concerns of communities to the north of Visalia which currently are impacted by utilization of the UP tracks and would be further impacted by new traffic along that corridor. We encourage the Authority to include in its plan specific mitigation options to address the concerns of these communities, e.g. by providing grade separation measures through the communities for both the new High Speed Rail lines and the existing UP lines or by allowing for minor modifications to the alignment allowing the High Speed Rail lines to bypass these particular communities. The first

option - grade separations - would not only serve the High Speed Rail's needs, but would also improve existing challenges within these communities.

Finally, we wish to endorse the City of Visalia's request that it be considered as a site for a maintenance/service facility serving the High-Speed Rail system. Again, the city's central location, availability of land, and workforce availability combine to make Visalia an excellent choice for this important component of the overall rail system.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment on the Draft EIR/EIS. We welcome the work done to date on this project and encourage its continuation. Please feel free to contact me if you need clarification of any of our comments or need additional information from us.

Sincerely,

Glenn D. Morris
Executive Director
Visalia Economic Development Corporation

cc: Steve Salomon, City of Visalia
Mike Cully, Visalia Chamber of Commerce

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cont

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720 W. Mineral King
Visalia, CA 93291
559/733-8332
559/734-7479 fax
www.visaliaedc.com
A non-profit organization



U.S. Department
of Transportation
Federal Railroad
Administration

**Response to Comments of Glenn D. Morris, Executive Director, Visalia Economic Development Corporation,
August 18, 2004 (Letter O031)**

O031-1

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 6.15.4 and 6.21.1. Please also see standard response 2.35.1 in regards to maintenance facilities. The HST system would be a completely grade separated system. All alignment options investigated have been designed to be completely grade separated.



Comment Letter O032

O032

California Native Plant Society

Santa Clara Valley Chapter
3921 E. Bayshore Blvd., Palo Alto, CA 94303

www.cnps-scv.org

August 23, 2004

California High Speed Rail Authority
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Faxed 8/27/04 to:
(916) 322-0827

Attn: California
High-Speed Train
Draft Program
EIR/EIS Comments

Re: Draft Environmental Impact Report/Draft Environmental Impact Statement
(DEIR/S) for the Proposed California High Speed Rail Project

Comments of the Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society

Our analysis covers the Bay Area to Merced High Speed Rail routes through the Santa Clara Valley and the adjacent Mt. Hamilton Range, and the impacts of these routes on plants and plant communities therein. This covers the following route alignments:

- Northern Tunnel
- Tunnel under Coe State Park
- Minimize tunnel under Coe State Park
- Pacheco Pass

We request that you take no further action on the existing Draft EIR/S but rather, withdraw and revise it to deal with the concerns we raise and recirculate it, because it is an inadequate document in its current form.

Specifically, the identification and analysis of biological resources in Santa Clara County and the adjacent Mt. Hamilton range is entirely inadequate for purposes of making any decisions about routing. It is also inadequate for making choices between the proposed project and the modal alternative.

Data Collection

No plant surveys were conducted, the rationale being that this is a program level DEIR/S. But there is no indication that a thorough search of existing data or publications had been done. There is much published and readily available data that was not consulted. The Biological Resources Appendix (Page 3.15-C-1) states that there was no data available from the California Native Plant Society. Yet the *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (Sixth Ed.)* (Tibor 2001) is easily accessible on-line, is constantly updated, and would have provided location information on all special status plants in the state, including those not included in the CNDDDB. The Appendix also states that there were no species-specific publications available (loc. cit.). I presume what they meant to say was that they did not bother to consult any, as there are many reputable, well known, readily available species-specific publications that are directly relevant to the areas under consideration. For example, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service *Recovery Plan for Serpentine Soil Species of the San Francisco Bay Area* (Elam 1998) provides detailed information on the location, distribution, ecology, threats, protection and restoration issues on six federally listed plant species and three animal species on

Coyote Ridge, directly in the path of two proposed alignments. Data from the CNPS Coyote Ridge vegetation survey, although not published at the time the DEIR/S was being researched, was available in electronic form and could easily have been obtained (Evens et al. 2004).

Data Analysis

There is no description of what methodology, if any, was used to analyze the special status plant data that was cited. The analysis of special status plants is particularly brief and superficial. It does not take into account number of occurrences, population size, or degree of threat. It does not include plants with rating below CNPS 1B, although these plants are CEQA eligible when local agencies identify them as significant and they must be included in the analysis.

The *California Gap Analysis*, computer software and database, used for analyzing vegetation communities is not a suitable database or tool for evaluating transportation route impacts. The data is not current, it excludes data not available throughout the state, such as that being developed using the new California vegetation classification, and it was designed to be used to identify areas and species that are in need of protection, not to justify proposed projects that have the potential for great harm to the environment. The worthy goals of California Gap Analysis are turned upside down in this DEIR/S.

There was virtually no recognition of existing conserved areas, or the goals, plans, or activities of the City of San Jose, Santa Clara County or other local governments, the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, the Santa Clara Valley Water District, or non-profit environmental organizations active in the area. There was no mention at all of the Santa Clara County Habitat Conservation Plan/Natural Communities Conservation Plan which is concerned with endangered species in the areas that would be impacted by several of the alignments. There was no mention of Coyote Ridge, whose preservation is being planned by a coalition of public and private agencies. This ridge, an area of great biodiversity, would be highly impacted and bisected by three of the proposed alignments. There was no mention of privately conserved lands in Isabel Valley, San Antonio Valley and elsewhere east of the Mt. Hamilton summit. There was no mention of the Bolsa de San Felipe (Soap Lake) privately owned wetland along Highway 152 that is considered a Significant Bird Area by the California Audubon Society (Cooper 2004).

There was brief mention of Henry Coe State Park and The Nature Conservancy's Mount Hamilton Project, whose purview covers the entire Hamilton Range from Alameda County to Highway 152. One would think the existence of a large state park and wilderness area and a major conservation effort such as the Mt. Hamilton Project would signal to the planners that there were important wilderness, open space, and conservation issues at stake in the Hamilton Range, but no steps were taken to explore it.

The route analysis basically uses this limited and inadequate data, which ignores substantial data on area significance to rank routes in terms of impact on sensitive species.

It would be a travesty to choose a route based upon the highly inadequate analysis in the DEIR/S on the grounds that endangered species issues and local concerns will be dealt with in a project level EIR/S through mitigation, avoidance, or by ignoring environmental impacts; when, in fact, no information on the ecological significance, restoration possibilities, or local land use concerns were ever considered.

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Dedicated to the preservation of California native flora

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The Santa Clara Valley chapter of the California Native Plant Society opposes high speed rail routes through the Hamilton Range because they will do great harm to endangered species, habitats, and biodiversity and open up areas to development that should remain wildlands.

Information already available, but not considered in the DEIR/S makes it clear that the Hamilton Range alignments should be rejected. This includes information on the location, distribution, rarity, endangerment, and difficulty of mitigation of specific special status species and habitats in specific locations along the Hamilton Range alignments.

Impacts to Rare and Endangered Plants and Plant Communities

Alignments

The system proposes four alignments from the San Jose area to the Central Valley. Three alignments would swing east at Metcalf Canyon, heavily impacting the Coyote Ridge area. One alternative then swings north, entering tunnels beyond Metcalf Canyon, but crossing at grade and heavily impacting special status species in both the Isabel and San Antonio Valleys. This is called the Northern Tunnel alignment. Alternatively, after leaving Metcalf Canyon two alignments swing south, passing through Henry Coe State Park, partly in tunnels, partly at the surface. One route is called the Tunnel Under Coe State Park. The other route, with less tunneling is called the Minimize Tunnel under Coe State Park. Finally there is a route that would go south from San Jose to Gilroy and follow State Route 152, over Pacheco Pass, with several tunnels. This is called the Pacheco Pass alignment. It could impact the Soap Lake area and the Pacheco Pass area.

Following is a review of areas in the Hamilton Range with special status plants that could be negatively impacted by one or more of the High Speed alignments. Table 1 provides a list of these plants, by status and area.

Impact Areas – Santa Clara County

1. Coyote Ridge

Coyote Ridge is a unique serpentine habitat of some 7,000 acres east of US Highway 101 between San Jose and Morgan Hill. It is the first range of hills east of the Coyote Valley. As such it represents a natural open space border to the metropolitan area, and 81% of San Jose voters chose to place it outside the urban development "Green Line." It is also a hot spot of plant and animal diversity. This has been documented in the U.S. Fish & Wildlife's *Recovery Plan for Serpentine Soil Species of the San Francisco Bay* (Elam 1998). It is home to ten special-status animal species, and it is the only remaining viable habitat for the Bay checkerspot butterfly, federally listed as threatened. This butterfly is dependent on the serpentine soil plant species found here. It is also habitat for the red-legged frog and California tiger salamander. There are 14 special status plants whose current existence on Coyote Ridge has been verified. There are six other special status plants found elsewhere in the Hamilton Range which may be on Coyote Ridge. The southernmost populations of the Tiburon Indian Paintbrush, on both federal and state endangered lists, are found here. The Metcalf Canyon jewelflower, on the federal endangered list, is found only in Metcalf Canyon. Two other plants impacted by these alignments are on the federal endangered list: the Santa Clara Valley dudleya and the coyote ceanothus. This area has been designated as critical habitat for the serpentine endemics by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. This is an area that the California Native Plant Society and a coalition of environmental groups have been working for the past decade to preserve. Other members in this coalition include: the Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, the Committee for

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Green Foothills, the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Acterra, the Greenbelt Alliance, and the Citizens' Committee to Complete the Refuge.

2. East of Mt. Hamilton: Isabel and San Antonio Valleys

The Hamilton Range to the east of the summit is an undeveloped area, an almost pristine wilderness between the urbanized area of the Santa Clara Valley and the Central Valley. Of particular concern to CNPS and other conservation organizations are the Isabel and San Antonio Valleys. The Northern Route would pass through these two valleys, mostly at grade. There are 26 special status plants, 16 of them CNPS list 1B, to the east of the Mt. Hamilton quad. The Nature Conservancy has placed a high priority on preservation of this area and has acquired a conservation easement on an 11,189 acre ranch in Isabel Valley. A 2,000-acre ranch in San Antonio Valley has 12 special status plants, including three of the four recorded populations of the Mt. Hamilton jewelflower.

3. Henry Coe State Park

Henry Coe State Park is the largest state park in Northern California. Located in mountains and valleys south and east of Mt. Hamilton, it contains a designated wilderness, the Orestimba Wilderness Area, other pristine areas, biodiversity and rare species equal to those of Isabel and San Antonio Valleys. It contains the other recorded population of the Mt. Hamilton jewelflower and 15 other special status plants. Of these plants, nine are CNPS list 1B. One plant, the robust monardella, was discovered just this summer by two CNPS members. Henry Coe State Park also has a strong and enthusiastic user base who value the wild and rugged experiences it offers.

Two other local environmental organizations have strongly opposed high speed rail alignments through Coe Park. These are:

The Loma Prieta Chapter of the Sierra Club, which states in its DEIR/EIS commentary:

"No part of Henry W. Coe State Park should be violated by a train, at grade or contained in a tunnel."

Advocates for Coe Park, which in its DEIR/EIS commentary makes these points:

"A rail route through a wilderness area is illegal. The two Coe Park alignments would pass through the Orestimba Wilderness.

New transportation corridors are discouraged by State and Federal law. All three Northern Routes create a new corridor through the Diablo Range, an area that is presently undeveloped."

4. Soap Lake and Pacheco Pass

The Pacheco Pass route could impact several sensitive plant species on the southern boundary of Santa Clara County if it goes through the Soap Lake (San Felipe Lake) area. These include San Joaquin saltbush, Hoover's button celery, hairless popcorn flower, saline clover, Oregon meconella, and the red-flowered lotus.

The route through Pacheco Pass follows an existing corridor, State Highway 152, a four-lane highway over the pass. Hall's bush mallow has been documented along this corridor and arcuate bush mallow and Loma Prieta hoita may be there. There is a very good example of sycamore alluvial woodland in

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O032-7



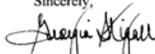
Comment Letter O032 Continued

this corridor. On the other side of the pass, the alignment could affect the very extensive wetlands in Los Banos area, which provide major bird habitat. Advocates for Coe Park have proposed a different alignment for the Pacheco Route that would avoid most of the Los Banos wetlands.

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cont.

Thank you for considering our comments on this document.

Sincerely,



Georgia Stigall
President, Santa Clara Valley Chapter
California Native Plant Society
Phone: 650-941-1068
Email: gstigall@aol.com

Cc: David Chipping, CNPS Conservation Chair
Cc: Don Mayall, CNPS/Santa Clara Valley Chapter Rare Plants South Chair

Attachment: Special Status Plants of the Hamilton Range (Table 1; two pages)

References

Cooper, Daniel S., *Important Bird Areas of California*, Audubon California, Pasadena, 2004.

Elam, Diane R., David H. Wright, and Bradley Goettle, *Recovery Plan for Serpentine Soil Species of the San Francisco Bay Area*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento, 1998.

Evens, Julie, and Sau San, *Woody and herbaceous associations of Coyote Ridge, Santa Clara Valley, CA*, California Native Plant Society, Sacramento, in press, 2004.

Tibor, David P., *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (Sixth Edition)*, California Native Plant Society, Sacramento, 2001.

The Nature Conservancy, *Bay Conservancy Program- The Second Year Report*, 2002.

Table 1. Special Status Plants, Hamilton Range August 23, 2004

Botanical name	Common Name	CNPS	State	Fed	Coyote Ridge	Hamilton and East	Coe Park	Soap Lake, Pacheco
<i>Acanthomitha lanceolata</i>	Santa Clara thornmint	4			?	X	X	
<i>Allium sharsmithae</i>	Sharsmith's onion	1B				X		
<i>Androsace elongata</i> ssp. <i>ocata</i>	California rockjasmine	4			?	X		
<i>Atriplex joaquimiana</i>	San Joaquin saltbush	1B		soc				X
<i>Balsamorhiza macrolepis</i> var. <i>macrolepis</i>	California balsamroot	1B			X			
<i>Calochortus umbellatus</i>	Oakland mariposa lily	4				X		
<i>Calyptridium parryi</i> var. <i>hesseae</i>	Hesse's pussywax	3				X		
<i>Campsis exigu</i>	Chaparral bellflower	1B				X	X	
<i>Cantilleja affinis</i> ssp. <i>neglecta</i>	Tiboron indian paintbrush	1B	CT	FE	X	X		
<i>Ceanothus ferrisae</i>	coyote ceanothus	1B		FE	X			
<i>Cirsium fontinale</i> var. <i>campylon</i>	Mt. Hamilton thistle	1B		soc	X	X		
<i>Clarkia breweri</i>	fairy fans	4				X	X	
<i>Clarkia concinna</i> ssp. <i>autoniza</i>	Santa Clara red ribbons	4		soc			X	
<i>Coreopsis hamiltonii</i>	Mt. Hamilton tickseed	1B		soc		X		
<i>Delphinium californicum</i> ssp. <i>interius</i>	hospitat canyon larkspur	1B		soc		X		
<i>Dudleya scottii</i>	Santa Clara Valley dudleya	1B		FE	X		X	
<i>Eriastrum brandegeae</i>	Brandegee's eriastrum	1B		soc		X		
<i>Eriastrum tracyi</i>	Tracy's eriastrum	1B	CR			X		
<i>Eriogonum argillaceum</i>	Coast Range buckwheat	4			?			
<i>Eriogonum umbellatum</i> var. <i>bahijiforme</i>	bay buckwheat	4				X		
<i>Eriophyllum jepsonii</i>	Jepson's woolly sunflower	4				X	X	
<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>hooveri</i>	Hoover's button celery	1B		soc				X
<i>Erysimum franciscanum</i>	San Francisco wallflower	4		soc	X			
<i>Fritillaria fatcata</i>	rubus fritillary	1B		soc		X		
<i>Fritillaria lilacea</i>	fragrant fritillary	1B		soc	X			
<i>Galium andrewsii</i> ssp. <i>gatense</i>	serpentine bedstraw	4			?	X		
<i>Hesperolimon serpentinum</i>	Napa dwarf flax	1B				X		
<i>Hoita strobilina</i>	Loma Prieta hoita	1B			X			?
<i>Lesingia micradenia</i> var. <i>glabrata</i>	smooth lessingia	1B			X		X	
<i>Lesingia tenax</i>	spring lessingia	4*				X	X	
<i>Linanthus ambiguus</i>	serpentine trianthus	4			X	X	X	

Santa Clara Valley Chapter, CNPS

Attachment to HSR Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments

Page 1

Comment Letter 0032 Continued

Table 1. Special Status Plants, Hamilton Range August 23, 2004

Botanical name	Common Name	CNPS	State	Fed	Coyote Ridge	Hamilton and East	Coe Park	Soap Lake, Pacheco
<i>Linanthus grandiflorus</i>	large-flowered linanthus	4			X		X	
<i>Lomatium observatorium</i>	Mt. Hamilton lomatium	1B				X		
<i>Lotus rubriflorus</i>	red-flowered lotus	1B						X
<i>Malacothrum arcuatum</i>	arcuate bush mallow	1B			?			
<i>Malacothrum hallii</i>	Hall's bush mallow	1B			X		X	X
<i>Meconella oregona</i>	Oregon meconella	1B						X
<i>Microseris sylvatica</i>	sylvan microseris	4				X		X
<i>Monardella villosa ssp. globosa</i>	robust monardella	1B					X	
<i>Phacelia phaeoloides</i>	Mount Diablo phacelia	1B				X	X	
<i>Plagiobothrys monostoides</i>	forget-me-not popcornflower	4				X		
<i>Plagiobothrys uncinatus</i>	hooked popcornflower	1B				X		
<i>Psilocarphus brevissimus var. multiflorus</i>	Delts woolly marbles	4					X	
<i>Sanicula saxatilis</i>	rock sanicle	1B	CR			X	X	
<i>Streptanthus albidus ssp. albidus</i>	Metcalf Canyon jewelflower	1B		FE	X			
<i>Streptanthus albidus ssp. peramoenus</i>	most beautiful jewelflower	1B			X			
<i>Streptanthus callistus</i>	Mount Hamilton jewelflower	1B				X	X	
<i>Trifolium depauperatum var. hydrophilum</i>	saline clover	1B						X

Source: CNDDDB and records CNPS Santa Clara Valley Chapter
 CNPS 1B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered
 CNPS 3 = Need more information
 CNPS 4 = Plants of limited distribution
 CR = California Endangered
 CT = California Threatened
 FE = Federal Endangered
 soc = species of concern

**Response to Comments of Georgia Stigall, President, California Native Plant Society, August 23, 2004
(Letter O032)**

O032-1

Please see standard response 6.3.1 regarding the HST segment between the Bay Area and the Central Valley (Mt. Hamilton Range). The Authority and the FRA disagree with your conclusions regarding the adequacy of the program environmental documentation and the need to recirculate the Draft Program EIR/EIS.

O032-2

Data from the California Natural Diversity Data Base regarding plant species of concern was consulted and is reported in the Technical Evaluations for Biological Resources, which were conducted for each region to support the Draft PEIR/S. These studies are available for review on the California High Speed Rail Authority website (http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/eir/regional_studies/default.asp). For example, the Bay Area to Merced Biological Resources Evaluation contains Table 8, which lists all of the special status plant species present along the project alignments and the acreage of habitat present along each alternative. The appendix indicates that there is no geospatial data available from the California Native Plant Society or species-specific publications. The Recovery Plan for Serpentine Soil Species of the San Francisco Bay Area has been reviewed, and although the document does contain maps of species occurrences, the level of detail of the mapping is general and is not in a GIS format. Additional analysis of available information will be performed in the program-level studies of the northern mountain crossing (Bay Area to Central Valley Corridor) and analyses of site-specific impacts will be performed as part of the anticipated project -level, tier 2 evaluations, and the data cited in the comment will be useful for these future environmental reviews.

O032-3

Please see standard response 3.15.2 regarding the level of detail used for this program-level EIR/Tier 1 EIS. Standard response 3.15.2 also discusses the anticipated future reviews of HST alignments between the Central Valley and the Bay Area. The Authority has determined not to pursue further consideration of alignments passing through and under Henry Coe State Park and the Orestimaba State Wilderness. Information referenced in this comment, e.g., the Nature Conservancy's Mount Hamilton Project, will be further evaluated as part of future analysis. The Co-lead agencies have met with the Nature Conservancy to continue discussions regarding its preservation efforts in the Diablo Range. The methodology used to analyze special status plants data is described in the Technical Evaluations for Biological Resources, which were conducted for each region and supported the Draft PEIR/S. These studies are available for review on the California High Speed Rail Authority website (http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov/eir/regional_studies/default.asp). Please see standard response 3.15.10 regarding review of potential conflicts with the provisions of habitat conservation plans (HCP), natural community conservation plans (NCCP), or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans. Please note that this PEIR/S has been prepared to support the identification of a system alternative (no project, modal, or HST), and the selection of HST corridor alignments for further study. The Co-lead agencies acknowledge that the PEIR/S data does not detail site-specific impacts of HST alignment options, but consider the information provided is sufficient to make program level decisions. The Co-lead agencies intend to rely upon the PEIR/S to eliminate certain alignment options from further study, including alignments that appeared to present more severe impacts to sensitive biological environments. The types of analyses requested in this comment and data provided in it could be

used as part of more detailed future studies. Please see standard response 3.15.13.

O032-4

Please note that the Co-lead agencies propose to continue and to supplement their evaluation of HST alignment options between the Central Valley and the San Francisco Bay Area before identifying a preferred alignment. Please see standard response 3.15.2. Further investigation has been recommended to identify a preferred alignment option within a broad corridor, which excludes alignment options through Henry Coe State Park and the Orestimaba State Wilderness. The study should consider alignment options between (and including) the Pacheco Pass Corridor (SR-152) to the south and the Altamont Pass Corridor (I-580) to the north. Please also see standard response 6.3.1. This comment provides a large amount of data on native plants located within the Merced to Bay Area alignments evaluated in the PEIR/S. This data will be used during the future review of alignments between the Central Valley and Bay Area.

O032-5

Please see response to Comment O032-4. Information provided in this comment letter will be used in future analyses. Please note that the Authority will not pursue alignment options passing through Henry Coe State Park and the Orestimaba State Wilderness.

O032-6

Please see response to Comment O032-4 and 5.

O032-7

Please see response to Comment O032-4 and 5.