

Response to Comments

Chapter 2. Federal Agencies Comment Letters

Comment Letter AF001

AF001



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS
MARINE CORPS AIR BASES WESTERN AREA MIRAMAR
P.O. BOX 452901
SAN DIEGO, CA 92145-2001

11230
G-5/High Speed Rail
May 5, 2004

CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY
ATTN MR DAN LEAVITT
925 L STREET SUITE 1425
SACRAMENTO CA 95814

RE: DRAFT PROGRAM ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACT STATEMENT (EIR/EIS) FOR THE PROPOSED CALIFORNIA HIGH
SPEED TRAIN SYSTEM

Dear Mr. Leavitt,

This is in response to the proposed California High Speed Train
System and the route alignment alternatives for San Diego
County. As a member of this community, we support the expansion
of mass transit and will continue to participate in the planning
process for this region. This initiative is noteworthy as the
region is in a perpetual state of declining resources. To
assist you in addressing the substantive context of our
concerns, I have briefly summarized them below for your
reference purposes. Previous statements provided to the High
Speed Rail Task Force on May 13, 1999 are provided for your
reference purposes (enclosure).

The proposed project is contained within Marine Corps Air
Station (MCAS) Miramar airspace and Area of Influence for land
use planning purposes. Any alignment alternative in proximity
to MCAS Miramar would be directly affected by the routine over-
flights of military fixed and rotary-wing aircraft transiting to
and from this installation. Of particular concern is the
proposed alignment alternative that follows Miramar Road
directly adjacent to the Miramar housing complex and the myriad
of sensitive habitats adjacent to this circulation alternative.
Further examination of the substantive impacts to this area will
be required. Impacts to federal facilities must be identified
and prevented, or mitigation measures implemented. Any proposed
alternative which, would limit or impact on the Marine Corp's
ability to perform mission essential training and readiness
requirements to meet national security objectives would not be
approved.

The east-west configuration of the Miramar Road alternative
raises some significant noise and safety concerns.
The proposed Miramar Road alternative would be directly
underneath the primary departure and arrival corridor, Field
Carrier Landing Practice, Touch and Go and Ground Controlled
Approach Flight patterns for Miramar operations. As a result,
examination of electronic emissions or interference with
military operations is requisite under the circumstances. In
addition, the proposed project is within Accident Potential Zone
(APZ) I, and the identified 75-80 Community Noise Equivalent
Level (CNEL) noise contours for Miramar operations. There is no
effective mitigation for exterior noise from over-flight and the
cumulative impacts of both the rail corridor traffic and
transiting military aircraft should be examined further.

Lastly, all environmental studies must address all pending or
transportation actions must include careful considerations that
may affect MCAS Miramar, including the proposed I-805 expansion
and additional commuter rail service and lines and the blocking
of access to ingress and egress.

Thank you for the opportunity to review this land use proposal.
If we may be of any further assistance, please contact Ms. C.
Laura Thornton at (858) 577-6603.

Sincerely,

[Handwritten signature]

P. S. PARKHURST
Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps
Community Plans and Liaison Officer
By direction of the Commander

Enclosure:
(1) DoD Statement to SANDAG Transportation High Speed Rail Task
Force May 13, 1999

AF001-2
cont.

AF001-3

AF001-1

AF001-2



Comment Letter AF001 Continued

DOD STATEMENT TO SANDAG TRANSPORTATION HIGH SPEED RAIL TASKFORCE
13 MAY 1999

On behalf of the United States Marine Corps, DOD expresses the following concerns about the three proposed routes for High-Speed Rail (HSR) line placement in San Diego County.

The following comments are general in nature and should not be used to infer a preferred alignment. Any effort to make use of Marine Corps' land for HSR that would limit or impact on the Marine Corps ability to perform its mission in any way would not be approved. These impacts could take the form of electronic interference to flight operations, interference with any of the airfield approach or safety surfaces required for airfield operations, encroachment on base boundaries that would impact family housing, quality of life, environmentally sensitive areas, other surface traffic patterns, or any other interference.

Formal approval or adoption of any preferred alternative, if determined to be feasible, could not occur until the High-Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) completes the Consolidated Land and Airspace Management Planning process with the MCAS Miramar staff. Guidance on this process has been provided to the HSRA

and they are in touch with the MCAS Miramar planning organization.

Any routes along I-15, on either side, will encroach on and impact some extremely sensitive environmental areas including very high quality vernal pools and habitat for the California gnatcatcher. All environmental documents for proposed future work must carefully consider the impacts to these area and all environmental issues at MCAS Miramar. Close coordination with and study of the pending Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan, to be released during the summer of 1999, is required.

MCAS Miramar has a critical shortage of military family housing. An Environmental Impact Statement is currently being prepared to study several sites about the Air Station which have been identified as suitable for housing, with potential for well over 1,000 units and ancillary facilities. All of these sites may eventually be required for housing of military families. Any study of proposed rail facilities must consider and avoid environmental impact to these areas, particularly noise impacts and blocking of access to ingress and egress.

All environmental studies must address all pending or proposed transportation actions that may affect MCAS Miramar, including

AF001-4

AF001-4
cont.

ENCLOSURE (1)



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Comment Letter AF001 Continued

the proposed I-805 expansion and additional commuter rail
service and lines.

AF001-4
cont.

Response to Comments of P. S. Parkhurst, U.S. Marine Corp, May 10, 2004 (Letter AF001)

AF001-1

Acknowledged.

AF001-2

Acknowledged. The Authority identified the both the Carroll Canyon and Miramar Road alignment options as preferred between Mira Mesa and San Diego. These alignment Canyon options would enable the HST system to directly serve downtown San Diego, whereas the I-15 to Qualcomm option would terminate about 8-miles from the city center at the Qualcomm Stadium (20 minutes by light rail). Directly serving Downtown San Diego would provide better connections to the regional transit system and airport. SANDAG, NCTD, MTDB, Caltrans District 11, and the City of San Diego all support direct HST service to downtown San Diego via the Inland Empire (I-215/I-15 Corridor).

The Carroll Canyon and Miramar Road alignment options have similar potential for environmental impacts. The Carroll Canyon option would avoid and minimize some potential impacts to Miramar Naval Air Station as compared to either the Miramar Road or I-15 alignment option. As compared to the I-15 option, one alignment through either Carroll Canyon or along Miramar Road would have less potential for impact to parklands and vernal pools, and less potential for growth-induced impacts, but more potential for visual, cultural, and floodplains impacts.

Should the HST proposal move forward, the Authority and the FRA will continue to work with the United States Marine Corps throughout the more detailed project-specific studies that will be required to select a specific alignment prior to implementation.

AF001-3

Subsequent project level environmental reviews would include further analysis of the cumulative effects of related projects in the vicinity of the proposed segments or portions of the proposed HST system, should a decision be made to move forward with the system.

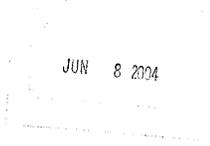
AF001-4

Please see standard response 6.31.4.

Comment Letter AF002

AF002

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515



May 26, 2004

Joseph Petrillo, Chairman
California High-Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Petrillo:

In response to your solicitation for public comment, we write to express our full support for the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (CHSRA's) Draft Program Environmental Impact Review / Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the proposed California High-Speed Train System as it relates to the San Francisco Bay Area. We wholeheartedly agree with the Authority's decision after thorough study of all alignment options to eliminate the Altamont Pass from further consideration.

A southern approach into the San Francisco Bay Area is the only economically and environmentally sound alignment option that meets the stated purpose of this project: to provide a predictable and consistent mode of intercity travel, connecting the state's major metropolitan areas, commercial airports, mass transit systems and highway network. A southern approach through the Pacheco Pass or the Diablo Range will efficiently serve all three population and economic centers of the Bay Area, while requiring only one split as trains travel through San Jose to Oakland and San Francisco. Minimizing the number of splits in the route between Los Angeles and San Francisco should reduce overall travel time, attracting a greater number of travelers to the new system.

The Altamont Pass, in contrast, would require an unwieldy and unlikely-to-be built three-way split in Union City to serve Oakland, San Francisco and San Jose. This split would seriously reduce the number of trains that can service each of the Bay Area's major metropolitan cities and double the operating costs for the system, transferring the project from one with an operating surplus to one with an operating deficit. The draft environmental document, therefore, appropriately concludes that an alignment along the Altamont Pass "would have an adverse impact on the commercial viability of the entire high speed train system."

The environmental implications of an alignment along the Altamont Pass are even more troubling. The Altamont route would require a new crossing over the San Francisco Bay. Not only is this an economically and politically unlikely alternative, a new Bay crossing

would impact sensitive wetlands, saltwater marshes, and aquatic habitat within and surrounding the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. The Bay Conservation and Development Commission has discouraged any new or expanded use of bay waters or shoreline habitat important to sensitive bay species. A high speed rail project that relies on a new bay crossing will likely derail the entire project.

The design of a project of this magnitude must be based on state-of-the-art planning and engineering principals that are applicable for a 21st century high-speed passenger train system. We commend the CHSRA for its sophisticated analysis of the alignment options in the San Francisco Bay Area and its ongoing commitment to sound transportation planning. As the CHSRA finalizes its EIR/EIS, we urge the Authority to remain firm in its wise decision to eliminate the Altamont Pass from further consideration as an alternative alignment.

Sincerely,

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress

AF002-1
cont.

AF002-1

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U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

**Response to Comments of Michael Honda, Zoe Lofgren, Anna Eshoo – United States Congress, June 8, 2004
(Letter AF002)**

AF002-1

Please see standard response 2.18.1.



Comment Letter AF003

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Anna G. Eshoo
14th District, California
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0514

AF003
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE
SUBCOMMITTEES
TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND THE INTERNET
HEALTH
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEES
INTELLIGENCE POLICY AND NATIONAL SECURITY - RANKING MEMBER
TECHNICAL AND TACTICAL INTELLIGENCE
WHIP AT LARGE
CO CHAIR
E 911 CAUCUS
CO CHAIR
MEDICAL TECHNOLOGY CAUCUS
VICE CHAIR
DEMOCRATIC BUDGET GROUP

Gertrude Reagan
967 Moreno Ave.
Palo Alto, CA 94303

August 6, 2004

California High Speed Rail Authority Board
Attn: California High-Speed Train
Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Board Members,

Please find enclosed correspondence from my constituent, Gertrude Reagan, regarding her concerns pertaining to the California High Speed Rail Project and in particular, the approach to the San Francisco Bay Area.

I respectfully request that you include Ms. Reagan's comments in your review of the California High Speed Rail Authority Draft Program EIR/EIS.

Sincerely, and gratefully,

Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Enclosure

Dear Rep. Eshoo:

July 17, 2004

Thank you for your good work on the recent Sanders Amendment. The voting process was very discouraging, but the closeness of the vote shows the level of concern, which is good!

Regarding High Speed Rail: Recently you have been siding with San Jose to have the line come directly there first, but...

The arguments made against the Altamont high speed rail routing are based on faulty assumptions:

1) San Jose would not receive worse service or less service. Technically it is feasible and common practice for European HSR systems to serve multiple branch lines, just as BART trains running through the Transbay Tube and SF originate from four different East Bay branch lines. Any modern rail line, including the HSR mainline to Southern California, can handle trains about every two minutes. Trains from every Northern California branch can run nonstop to LA. Market demand will determine how many nonstop (and slower trains) San Jose will have heading south.

2) Environmental concerns about crossing the Bay at Dumbarton are overblown. A rail line already exists there. Moreover, a plan is in place to restore passenger service on this line. Environmental problems are far more serious on the San Jose-Fresno mountain crossings currently being considered, as well as on wetlands in the San Joaquin Valley near Los Baños.

Regarding point 1 above:

a) Because San Jose would be on a branch line, it would have its own dedicated trains to Fresno and LA. Passengers boarding to go south would have empty trains to board.

b) Studies have shown conclusively that San Francisco will have the highest ridership of all Northern California cities. SF will need to have nonstop service to Southern California. These trains should be able to bypass San Jose. It would make less sense to build special tracks for

AF003-1

AF003-2

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Federal Railroad Administration

Comment Letter AF003 Continued

them to run right through San Jose at high speed, or to slow down to pass through.

c) The Altamont routing would increase the distance between San Jose and southern destinations by nine miles. However, it would decrease the distance between San Francisco and the latter slightly. And it would drastically decrease distances between Bay Area cities and Modesto, Stockton, and Sacramento (by as much as 120 miles).

The Altamont routing has more potential to serve a lot more needs:

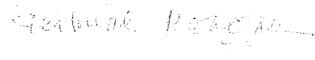
1) The two southerly proposed routings would greatly increase the trip distance between the Bay Area and Sacramento, making it unattractive to riders. Currently Florida is contemplating building a HSR line between Tampa and Orlando, about the same distance as Bay Area-Sacramento (approved by voters in 2000, but vehemently opposed by Governor Jeb Bush).

2) The Altamont routing would give us vastly improved train service to Modesto, Stockton, and Sacramento — in addition to Fresno and Southern California. These shorter distance travel needs should not be overlooked. Recent European HSR projects, in the Netherlands and Southeast England (Chunnel link), serve more travelers/commuters in the 50-150 mile range than on longer distances. Political support for the projects came from these constituencies. When you look at our freeways, it's clear that our emphasis should be likewise. Without such emphasis, the whole California HSR proposal is vulnerable to those who will argue that HSR offers nothing for our traffic problems closer to home.

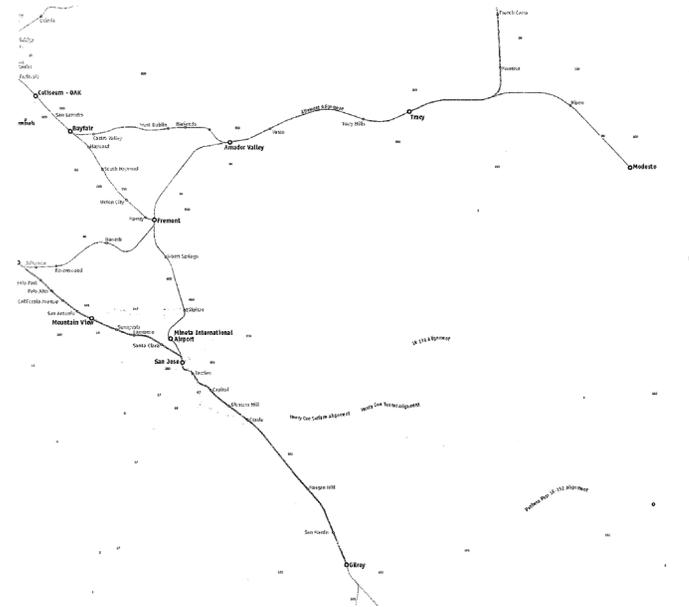
Last but not least:

- Please study the enclosed map.
- Altamont has the shortest overall route miles for the complete system including Sacramento — meaning it would save billions.
- PCL, Sierra Club, other environmental groups support Altamont and oppose the Diablo (east of San Jose) routing through the largest remote wilderness area in the region.
- <http://www.arch21.org/CaHighSpeed.dir/hsrindex.html> explains these issues and more — an excellent and well researched report on the web.

Sincerely,



AF003-2
cont.



Response to Comments of Anna Eshoo – United States Congress, August 11, 2004 (Letter AF003)

AF003-1

Acknowledged.

AF003-2

Please see standard response 2.18.1.

Comment Letter AF004

AF004



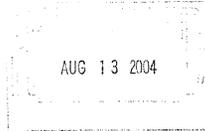
United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Mojave National Preserve
222 East Main Street, Suite 202
Barstow, California 92311

IN REPLY REFER TO:
L7619 (MOIA)

August 5, 2004

Mr. David Valenstein
Federal Railroad Administration
1120 Vermont Avenue (Mail Stop 20)
Washington, DC 20590



Dear Mr. Valenstein:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment on the draft Program Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the proposed California High-Speed Train System. Mojave National Preserve is a unit of the National Park Service situated between Interstate Highways 15 and 40 in southeastern California with a detached unit, Clark Mountain, to the north of I-15. We are interested in your project and its potential relation to other rail projects in California that would potentially abut Mojave's boundaries.

The Nevada Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration have issued a Notice of Intent to prepare an EIS for magnetic levitation rail between Anaheim, California and Las Vegas Nevada. The project proponents anticipate a Record of Decision by 2005/2006 at which time they will seek additional funding for construction. Stations will be located throughout the State, including Ontario Airport and the City of Anaheim. Because your proposal also includes stations in these two places, it would be reasonable and logical for you to coordinate your efforts with this other major rail project. Both projects share overlapping markets and may have impacts on each other as well as cumulative impacts to consider. Points of contact for the MagLev project include Mr. Christopher Bonanti of the Federal Railroad Administration, and Mr. Jeffrey Fontaine and Mr. James Mallery of the Nevada Department of Transportation.

I am also aware of another proposal for high-speed rail service from southern California to Las Vegas, Nevada. Bombardier Technology is interested in providing service between Victorville, California and Las Vegas, Nevada along the CalTrans right-of-way on the I-15 corridor. The draft Program EIR/EIS appears to be proposing the same technology as Bombardier Technology presented to me two years ago. I do not know the current status of this Victorville-to-Las Vegas proposal but encourage you to look into this other proposal and how it might be coordinated with the draft Program EIR/EIS.

If you have any questions about these other proposals, please feel free to contact Ms. Danette Woo, Environmental Compliance Specialist at (760) 255-8841 or danette_woo@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Mary G. Martin
Superintendent

cc: Mr. Dan Leavitt, California High Speed Rail Authority ✓

AF004-1



CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

**Response to Comments of Mary Martin, Superintendent – U.S. Department of the Interior, August 13, 2004
(Letter AF004)**

AF004-1

Acknowledged. The Authority is aware of the Mojave National Preserve and Clark Mountain units; however, they are far to the east of any alignment options under consideration. The Authority will coordinate with the Nevada Department of Transportation and other project sponsors that propose high speed rail and Maglev systems particularly with regard to proposed stations and alignments affecting areas in proximity to proposed HST alignments and stations. Should the HST proposal move forward, project level studies will further consider the potential for cumulative impacts resulting from these other proposals.

As the federal lead agency for this Program EIR/EIS, the FRA will continue to provide coordination regarding studies of high-speed rail and Maglev proposals in California. In addition, the Authority will coordinate with the Nevada Department of Transportation and other project sponsors during subsequent phases of project development and implementation that involve California.

Comment Letter AF005

DENNIS A. CARDOZA
18TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DEPARTMENT OPERATIONS,
OVERSIGHT, NUTRITION AND FORESTRY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON GENERAL FARM
COMMODITIES AND RISK MANAGEMENT
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SUBCOMMITTEE ON WATER AND POWER

COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON RESEARCH

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0518

October 17, 2003

AUG 31 2004

AF005

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448 WEST WEBER AVENUE, SUITE 240
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(209) 946-0361
(800) 356-6424

Mr. Joseph E. Petrillo
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Petrillo:

I am writing to inform the California High Speed Rail Authority of my strong support of the Authority's plans to develop a High Speed Rail System in California that will run from Sacramento through the San Joaquin Valley to San Diego, with portions of the system branching out to the Bay Area.

AF005-1

As you are aware, the San Joaquin Valley is California's fastest growing region of the state. For this reason, it is essential that the High Speed Rail System include numerous stops in the San Joaquin Valley, including Stockton, Modesto and Merced. These stops in the Valley will help to address our region's transportation, economic, environmental and quality of life goals. Specifically, they will help to alleviate the increasing demands of growth by helping to address the Valley's traffic congestion and air quality needs.

AF005-2

I am also very supportive of efforts underway to consider development of portions of the former Castle Air Force Base as a maintenance hub for the High Speed Rail System. The Castle Airport, Aviation and Development Center would be a highly desirable location for a maintenance facility, as it would be centrally located to the system, and would appear to have the necessary land and workforce resources.

AF005-3

As you may be aware, the San Joaquin Valley consistently ranks among the highest unemployment regions in the nation. Route stops in Merced, Modesto and Stockton and the development of a maintenance facility at Castle would greatly benefit the Valley, as they would generate jobs and economic growth activity for the region.

I appreciate the opportunity to express my support for the High Speed Rail route stops in Merced, Modesto and Stockton and for the siting of a maintenance facility at Castle. Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any further assistance in this effort.

Sincerely,

Dennis Cardoza
Member of Congress



CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Response to Comments of Dennis Cardoza – U.S. Congress, August 31, 2004 (Letter AF005)

AF005-1

Acknowledged.

AF005-2

Acknowledged. Please see standard response 2.31.4 regarding potential station stops. The Authority has identified potential HST stations at Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto, Merced, Fresno, and Bakersfield to serve the Central Valley's intercity travel markets.

AF005-3

Acknowledged. The Authority has identified the Downtown Merced and Castle Airport, Aviation and Development Center as potential HST station sites to serve Merced County. One of these sites would be selected during subsequent project-specific environmental studies. Please see standard response 2.35.1 in regards to the selection of maintenance facilities locations.

Comment Letter AF006

TOM LANTOS
CALIFORNIA

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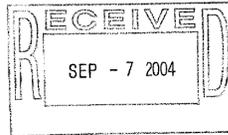
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

AF006
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE
Ranking Democratic Member

GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE
Subcommittee on Energy Policy,
Natural Resources and Regulatory Affairs
Subcommittee on National Security,
Veterans' Affairs and International Relations

Co-Chair, Permanent United States
Congressional Delegation to the
European Parliament
Member, United States
Congressional Delegation to the
NATO Parliamentary Assembly
Co-Chair, Congressional
Human Rights Caucus
Member, United States Holocaust Memorial Council

August 31, 2004



California High Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair and Board Members:

I want to take this opportunity to comment on the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) currently under review by the High Speed Rail Authority (HSR). I strongly believe that a high-speed system offering fast and convenient rail service between Northern and Southern California can provide environmental and economic benefits to all Californians.

I have two concerns as you review the DEIR. First, I am concerned about the omission of the Altamont Pass alternative route. There are many important and very compelling meritorious arguments for not choosing this alternative, however, I believe the overall viability of the project is enhanced by considering all alternatives during the decision making process.

Second, I am a long-time advocate of protecting our environmental resources, particularly open space, parks, and wetlands. Some of the proposed HSR routes would impact sensitive areas including Henry Coe State Park, Orestimba Wilderness, Mt. Hamilton, Coyote Ridge, the Grassland Ecological Area, and the aquatic resources and open space of the Diablo Range. I believe that HSR impact on these environmentally sensitive areas must be fully considered prior to any decision.

I urge you to undertake a revision of the draft environmental impact to ensure that all alternatives and all environmental impacts are fully included and considered.

Cordially,

TOM LANTOS
Member of Congress

AF006-1

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♻️



U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Response to Comments of Tom Lantos – U.S. Congress, August 31, 2004 (Letter AF006)

AF006-1

Please see standard response 2.18.1.