

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>no justice in summarily taking one of the last wilderness areas left in the Bay Area.</p> <p>Based on personal experience, (I am a conservation biology graduate student at San Jose State University) I know that the biodiversity of the affected area in Henry Coe Park is much higher than the Pacheco Pass, which is in turn much higher than Altamont Pass. The latter is the perfect route from the biodiversity standpoint -- it has already been largely destroyed of native vegetation by grazing, the freeway, and wind turbines.</p>		
				<p>The route would be slightly longer, but the Altamont Pass route is superior in many ways environmentally.</p> <p>Some adverse impacts are always necessary, but given the already fragile nature of the East Bay montains, that have been impacted in many ways already over the last 150 years, we must choose the least damaging alternative routing here.</p> <p>Please rethink this hasty decision.</p>	W192-2	Please see standard response 2.18.1.

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
W193	8/31/2004	Jean Bennett, Consultant (Optics)	Planning and Conservation League 1275 Sage Court Ridgecrest, CA 93555	<p>My comments on this Draft EIR/EIS</p> <p>Mr. Joe Petrillo, Chair California High Speed Rail Authority 925 L St., Suite 1425 Sacramento, CA 95814</p> <p>Dear Mr. Petrillo:</p> <p>This letter presents comments on the California High Speed Rail Draft Program EIR/EIS.</p> <p>The DEIR/S is flawed because it omits the possibility of an Altamont Pass alignment as an alternative to tunneling through the more mountainous Mt. Hamilton and Pacheco Pass areas to connect the Central Valley to the Bay Area. As you may know, the Altamont Pass alignment was the recommended preferred alignment of the Intercity High Speed Rail Commission, the predecessor to the California High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA).</p> <p>An Altamont Pass alignment would follow the existing I-580/I-680 corridor, with the following potential benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No impact on Henry Coe State Park, the second largest state park in California, including its pristine Orestimba Wilderness ▪ Less overall growth inducement in wilderness and undeveloped areas 	W193-1	Please see standard response 2.18.1.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less impact on wetlands ▪ Faster Los Angeles-San Francisco travel times ▪ Service to over 1 million East Bay and Northern Central Valley residents in Phase I of the project. ▪ Traffic congestion relief on I-80 and I-580/I-680 ▪ Much faster travel times between the Bay Area and Sacramento ▪ Cost savings of up to \$2 billion, according to documents in the DEIR/S record. <p>This Program DEIR/S should not be used to decide which alignment to use. Rather, a new EIR/S should fully explore an Altamont Pass alignment, providing a complete and careful comparison to other alignment options for public comment.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of these comments.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jean M. Bennett, PhD</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
W194	8/31/2004	Edward Thompson, California Director	American Farmland Trust 260 Russell Blvd, Suite D Davis, CA 95616	Formal comments of American Farmland Trust will be sent 8-31-04 via e-mail to dleavitt@hsr.ca.gov and cpourvahidi@hsr.ca.gov. Please contact [email address omitted to protect privacy] to acknowledge receipt. Thank you.		Acknowledged.
W195	8/31/2004	Mark Birnbaum, CPA	10 Meadowbrook Ct. Novato, CA 94947	<p>Dear Mr. Petrillo:</p> <p>This letter presents comments on the California High Speed Rail Draft Program EIR/EIS.</p> <p>The DEIR/S is flawed because it omits the possibility of an Altamont Pass alignment as an alternative to tunneling through the more mountainous Mt. Hamilton and Pacheco Pass areas to connect the Central Valley to the Bay Area. As you may know, the Altamont Pass alignment was the recommended preferred alignment of the Intercity High Speed Rail Commission, the predecessor to the California High Speed Rail Authority (HSRA).</p> <p>An Altamont Pass alignment would follow the existing I-580/I-680 corridor, with the following potential benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No impact on Henry Coe State Park, the second largest state park in California, including its pristine Orestimba Wilderness 	W195-1	Please see standard response 2.18.1.

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				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Less overall growth inducement in wilderness and undeveloped areas ▪ Less impact on wetlands ▪ Faster Los Angeles-San Francisco travel times ▪ Service to over 1 million East Bay and Northern Central Valley residents in Phase I of the project. ▪ Traffic congestion relief on I-80 and I-580/I-680 ▪ Much faster travel times between the Bay Area and Sacramento ▪ Cost savings of up to \$2 billion, according to documents in the DEIR/S record. <p>This Program DEIR/S should not be used to decide which alignment to use. Rather, a new EIR/S should fully explore an Altamont Pass alignment, providing a complete and careful comparison to other alignment options for public comment. No further decisions or work on the project should be done, until such time as this EIR/S is prepared.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration of these comments.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p>		

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W196	8/31/2004	Bill Hough, Transit Planner	238 East 30th Street #2F New York, NY 10016	I support the position of The California Department of Parks and Recreation in urging your rail planners to drop the proposal to tunnel through the Henry W. Coe State Park and instead reconsider a track over the Altamont Pass.	W196-1	Please see standard response 6.3.1.
				By eliminating the Altamont route, the CHSRA made this a deeply flawed EIR/EIS which should not be adopted in its present form.	W196-2	Please see standard response 2.18.1.
W197	8/31/2004	Amanda Evans, Student	1142 Bel Air Court Modesto, CA 95350- 5527	<p>I am a single middle-aged mother of two dependent children. I have one child who is grown and on his own. I am attending California State University Stanislaus, and am planning on graduating next spring with a BA degree in Communication. As we prepare for the coming school year I realize the importance of expressing my opinion during the extended public comment period for the EIR for the planned High Speed Rail in the Central Valley of California. My understanding is that the official comment period is open through August 31st, 2004.</p> <p>I live in Modesto, and have for most of my 46 years. I am aware that our area is the worst air quality designation that can be given. Like southern California, we are rated Extreme non-attainment. The plan to build steel wheel on steel</p>	W197-1	Acknowledged.

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>rail high speed trains is better than no plan to build high speed rail. Rail is the most efficient and least polluting mode of travel compared to automobiles and especially air travel. Air travel is the most polluting mode of travel there is.</p>		
				<p>MagLev would be a better choice. Solar Energy can power MagLev. It is low maintenance because the train is magnetically levitated and does not have the friction of conventional steel on steel. If we apply Solar Technology, not only will we be improving air quality by moving people without burning fossil fuels, we will reduce carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere. Maglev can help reduce the impacts of global warming. Designing Solar into the project will make this project an example of environmental sustainability. MagLev trains can also carry freight.</p> <p>Concerning connectivity, the number of miles traversed by the proposed trains is more than those in the Bay Area. Also, Southern California is building MagLev from Riverside to LAX, and there are considerations for Nevada and for Baltimore. With increasing populations, we need to utilize the power of the sun. If we consider seven generations into the future as many indigenous peoples did and increasing</p>	W197-2	Please see standard response 2.10.3.

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>numbers of thinking planners and designers do, solar power is the preferred choice.</p> <p>MagLev is better for turns and grades, so it is good for helping preserve the environment, due to ease of conforming to the terrain. If we design solar energy into the project, this project alternative should be the best yet.</p> <p>When it comes to State of the Art Technology, MagLev wins. Much of the time in my own life when I have paid less, I have purchased an inferior product. I have frequently wished I had spent the few dollars more and received a higher quality product. If we build steel on steel, will we ask ourselves if we have built an inferior rail system? The savings in maintenance and environmental health of the planet outweigh the higher initial investment required to build a significantly better train. I urge planners, thinkers, designers, and decision-makers to consider the benefits of Solar powered MagLev.</p> <p>Thank you, Amanda Evans Copies will be sent to elected officials including Governor Schwarzenegger, and Senators Feinstein and Boxer</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
W198	8/31/2004	Larry Miller, Business Consultant	San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee 1584 East Utah Ave. Fresno, CA 93720	<p>The letter regards the proposed inclusion of a connecting High-Speed Rail link from the Stockton-Manteca region of the Sacramento – Bakersfield Corridor to the Bay Area Rapid Transit terminus in Livermore.</p> <p>CAHSRA</p> <p>Pursuant to its enabling legislation, California High Speed Rail Authority's Draft Program EIR considers only one corridor of access to the Bay Area from Southern California. It has narrowed this option to what it calls the "Bay Area to Merced" alignment. Nonetheless the plan simultaneously calls for an additional spur carrying the remainder of the system through the Central Valley to Sacramento in a fashion that does not connect the northern section of the system to the Bay Area.</p> <p>While the Bay Area to Merced corridor options yet under consideration by the Draft do appear to link Southern California with the Bay Area more expeditiously than an Altamont Pass alignment, nonetheless the nature of the San Jose alignment does effectively disenfranchise a very large population of Northern California from direct access to the Bay Area. One could argue that as many as 5 million people from the already heavily populated and</p>	W198-1	Please see response 2.36.1. In addition, the Authority does not consider the direct link to Sacramento a "spur"; the preferred corridor between the Bay Area and the Central Valley would connect Sacramento and the Northern San Joaquin Valley to the Bay Area with competitive HST travel times. Please also see standard response 6.3.1.

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>rapidly growing Sacramento to Modesto region either are or will be excluded from direct access. The various coalitions of environmental groups, land speculators, and regional advocates who have sought to replace the Bay Area to Merced connection through San Jose with a alignment over Altamont Pass and on to the East Bay Area are testament to the immensity of this prospective disenfranchisement.</p> <p>I believe it would a tragedy not to find a way to facilitate both a northern and southern access to the Bay Area for the system. One only needs look at how the same conundrum has hamstrung Amtrak’s San Joaquin service. Since Amtrak’s San Joaquins must follow the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and Union Pacific lines from Stockton to Oakland via Pittsburgh and Martinez, the service is so circuitous that it attracts only a tiny fraction of its latent ridership. Amtrak and its sponsor CalTrans call the service “leisure” rather business quality service because it is so indirect and slow. My own experience of the service and its operations leads to me to conclude that ridership would increase immediately and by a factor of as much as 10 times--if the route simply had a safe, reliable direct access from the Vallev to the Bay Area at a</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>speed of 70 mph or greater.</p> <p>While I do not see the value for HSR in trading the limitations of the San Jose access for even more limitations with access via Altamont Pass, I do believe a very workable and very cost-effective alternative exists. Namely, I am persuaded that it would be easily possible and economically desirable to develop (in addition to the Merced-San Jose corridor) a short link of approximately 40 miles of High Speed connection between the Sacramento to Bakersfield corridor in the Central Valley and the Bay Area Rapid Transit terminus in Livermore. Given schedule and platform compatibility, this short link would add quality access to the Bay Area from Northern California as well as Southern California.</p> <p>This rail link could follow the existing Western Pacific Rail Road route that runs south from Stockton and turns west near the city of Lathrop and Manteca to travel into Livermore only a few miles from the BART station. This route rises at only a one-percent grade and has been used (and now under-used) for passenger rail service for well over a century.</p> <p>The Altamont Commuter Express currently operates three round-trip trains per day on the route, which it</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>follows past Livermore to San Jose. ACE is limited by its infrastructure, its ability to raise capital and by the nature of its organization. ACE is therefore not in a position to purchase the corridor and assume the kind of powers delegated to CAHSR. Left to its own devices, ACE is likely to continue to expand its highly successful but very limited operations on a slow growth curve. HSR, however, need only connect its Central Valley line to BART in Livermore to interconnect several systems on a grand scale. And in so doing, HSR could provide for as much continuing expansion to the Bay Area as Northern California could support through its ridership for decades to come.</p> <p>What I propose therefore is improving the corridor and providing High Speed Service or (at the very least) much higher speed service only from the Sacramento to Bakersfield HSR corridor to the BART station in Livermore. The route is already grade-separated at its crossings of Interstate 5 and Interstate 580 and Highway 120 and would need comparatively few grade separations and road diversions prior to entering Livermore, where it could connect with the existing BART line.</p> <p>Thus for a minimum capital cost and</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>with minimum amount of construction, such a connection would allow for the maximal integration of HSR with existing Amtrak, ACE and BART services and it would more than double the system’s connectivity to the Bay Area from the Central Valley and Northern California. I do not pretend to offer a program level cost estimate for this link, but I believe the cost could be well under \$1 billion—and the link could be installed in such a way as to allow for nearly unlimited incremental future growth.</p> <p>One attractive aspect of the Western Pacific Route is that this is one of the few rail corridors that Union Pacific Rail Road has publicly acknowledged that it would be willing to sell—or perhaps trade. Although the scope of the entire HSR project may originally have called for only one route of access to the Bay Area for the system, I urge CAHSRA and the Federal Railway Administration to consider the tremendous increases in value to the system for a comparatively minimum additional cost by adding this second corridor of access to the Bay Area.</p> <p>Larry Miller Fresno County Public Representative And Chairman Operations and Marketing Committee</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee (By statute advising Amtrak and Caltrans on the San Joaquin Corridor service)		
W199	8/31/2004	Patrick Moore	Sierra Club, Loma Prieta Chapter 1129 Wright Ave Mountain View, CA 94043	According to the Final EIR/S of the Transbay Terminal/Caltrain Downtown Extension/Redevelopment Vol. I pg 2-44, Caltrain is planning on running 132 trains/day. In the HSR Draft EIR/S document, the section that discusses the operation reasons the Altamont Pass corridor was eliminated from further consideration, there was no discussion of this congestion in the Caltrain corridor.	W199-1	The capacity constraints of the Transbay Terminal were reported in Section 6.1 of the Draft Program EIR/EIS. Please also see standard response 2.18.1 in regards to the Altamont Pass.
				The Altamont Pass would allow HSTs to depart the Caltrain (congested) main line 25 miles from downtown extension at the Redwood City Junction. Any Diablo Range/Pacheco Pass alternative would require competing with the 132 Caltrain trains the entire length of the Caltrain corridor. Furthermore, there is no discussion of Union City's planned intermodal station at the Union City Bart station.	W199-2	Please see standard response 2.18.1. A multi-modal HST station at Union City was identified by the Authority is the preferred station location for a potential HST station serving Southern Alameda County.
W200	8/31/2004	Doralee Boles, Private citizen	1721 Kent Avenue Lodi, CA 95242	In 1990 I was privileged to serve as a member of the High Speed Rail Study Group, which was commissioned among other things to study the various corridors and possible alignments for the development of a	W200-1	The Authority has identified the Hayward Line/I-880 alignment as the preferred alignment option between Oakland and San Jose because it would have higher ridership potential and considerably less potential

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>high speed rail line to connect the Los Angeles basin with the Bay Area and northern California. At the time, I was the Program Director responsible for the development of the commuter rail service in the Altamont.</p> <p>My comments are specific to the critical importance on a statewide basis of the Altamont alignment for access to the Bay Area. Having worked for a number of years in a capacity which brought me in contact with the political realities of consensus building and financing structures, I am well aware that what is most beneficial and logical is not always what is politically correct or how decisions are made.</p> <p>In making any argument for a decision certain parameters should be laid. Certain logical assumptions should be the basis for any conclusions. In my view, four critical factors emerge in the selection of a corridor for access to the Metropolitan Bay Area. They are Cost, Revenues, Population served and Environmental Impacts</p> <p>Construction cost : The Altamont alignment when originally studied came in at a cost considerably lower than the other two alternatives primarily due to the fact that it is the shortest in total miles and requires only six miles of tunnels to build the line as opposed to</p>		<p>environmental impact than the Hayward Line/Niles/Mulford, which goes through the Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge. The Hayward line/Niles/Mulford option would result in considerably higher potential for environmental impacts (hydrology and water resources, biology and wetlands, visual impacts, and Section 4(f) and 6(f) parkland impacts) than the Hayward Line/I-880 alignment option. Please also see standard response 2.18.1 regarding the Altamont Pass.</p>

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>19 and 9 miles of tunnels for the other two alignments. Construction costs for the Altamont was estimated at 2 billion dollars less than the competing alignments.</p> <p>Revenues: It was estimated that the revenues generated would be higher on an alternative alignment, what was not factored into that equation was the integrated commuter market which would be captured from the seamless amalgamation of BART, ACE, the Capitol Corridor, and the potential Dumbarton Caltrain line.</p> <p>Population: It has been well documented that growth in the great Central Valley of California is expected to explode over the next 25 years. The Altamont alignment will serve all three major population cores: the LA Basin, the San Francisco Bay /Silcon Valley and the great central valley of California and connecting to the State Capital. Over a million more people than either alternative which are proposed.</p> <p>It is common knowledge that all of the successful high speed rail systems of the world integrate their other passenger rail services with their High Speed system to maximize the catchment areas and the financial benefits. To that end the Altamont</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>would include seventeen additional stations, two in the east Bay including Merced, Modesto, Stockton, Tracy, Amador Valley Livermore Pleasanton, Mineta San Jose International Airport, and Merced. I recently read that each weekday, about 50,000 San Joaquin County residents commute into the Bay Area. Capturing just 10% of that market would fill ten trains each way, each day, each one bringing workers into the Silicon Valley, and at 1/2 to 1/3 the time of the fastest alternative commute. This kind of information needs to be integrated into the projections for usage and resulting revenues.</p>		
				<p>Environmental :I am unclear as to why the EIR appears to have no difficulty with building a new HSR alignment along the existing UPRR line through the South Bay wetlands. It would appear to me that the Mulford Line portion of Pacheco alignment would result in impacts from traversing 4 miles of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge (within the existing tracks), a major wildlife and bird sanctuary." However, this appears to be minimized while the Altamont e reconstruction of the Dumbarton crossing for HSR is characterized as next to impossible due</p>	<p>W200-2</p>	<p>Please see standard response 6.2.2, and standard response 2.18.1.</p>

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				to its environmental impacts.		
				<p>After visiting the High Speed Rail services of France, Spain and Germany and seeing the inherent potential for California as one of the world’s major economies, I am convinced that it is imperative that we build “the right” system. By that I mean a system designed to accomodate the most Californians in the most effective manner. For that reason, I believe the Altamont is a critcal component of that system.</p> <p>Thanks you for your kind consideration of my words,</p> <p>A 5th Generation Californian</p>	W200-3	Please see standard response 2.18.1.
W201	8/31/2004	Russell Reagan	927 Gregory Place Davis,CA 95616	<p>The EIR/S should include the Altamont route. The original BART system was planned with essentially no provision for connecting to future rail to cities just beyond the Bay Area: Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto. Again the CHSR system being planned is repeating this same mistake by squandering the opportunity to serve these shorter distance markets. If the Altamont routing were selected, the same HSR infrastructure could accommodate these shorter distance services and thus provide much greater value to Californians. Even though the primary target of the project is travel between</p>	W201-1	Please see standard response 2.18.1.

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				northern and southern California, The HSR infrastructure could do so much more, following examples set by England's CTRL and the new HSR line in the Netherlands. Service between the cities of the Bay Area, and Sacramento, Stockton, Modesto, and intermediate points should be included in the scope of the markets to be served.		
W202	8/31/2004	Farm Bureau	Merced County PO Box 1232 Merced, CA 95340	MERCED COUNTY FARM BUREAU PO BOX 1232 MERCED, CA 95340 209-723-3001 Attn: California High-Speed Train Fax: (916) 322-0827 Draft Program EIR/EIS Comments Attn: California High-Speed Train 925 L Street, Suite 1425 Sacramento, CA 95814 August 30, 2004 The Merced County Farm Bureau would like to submit the following comments on the California High-Speed Train Draft Program EIR/EIS. General Comments This is a statewide project with statewide impacts. This statewide project has the potential to negatively affect the working landscape of agriculture in the state of California. It is the only place on earth that has	W202-1	See responses to Comment Letter 0057. This (W202) is a repeated Comment Letter.

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>the soil, water and climate to grow the diversity of crops we produce each year. We are a multi billion dollar industry for our region as well as our state.</p> <p>The agricultural production in the San Joaquin Valley (Kern, Tulare, Kings, Fresno, Madera, Merced, Stanislaus, & San Joaquin Counties) is well over half of the total for California. It is an inadequate assessment to only measure the impact on farmland that will be lost through construction. The growth inducement that this project will have on the remaining farmland in the Valley needs to be studied and considered before this project is to move any further.</p> <p>Statewide policies that encourage and reward smart growth policies is needed before we consider investing tax payers money into a project that will have a negative impact on our infrastructure (roads, schools, police/sheriff, fire, etc.) and our quality of life here in the San Joaquin Valley. We do not need to become the bedroom communities for southern California or the Bay Area.</p> <p>This project has the potential to speed that growth without the needed safeguards in place. The acknowledgement that our precious farmland is irreplaceable and should be</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>mitigated with in-lieu fees is a necessity. The Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (LESA) from the State Department of Conservation should be used to evaluate the impacts and establish the fee so that land preservation policies could be implemented with adequate monetary resources.</p> <p>We are also puzzled on why the Altamont was not studied as part of the Draft EIR/EIS. If it was not a feasible alternative, it should be shown to be not feasible with the documentation available to the public in the document.</p> <p>CEQA Requirements Agricultural resources are a part of the existing physical environment subject to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"). Any proposed action by the California High Speed Rail Authority ("Authority") that would potentially affect agricultural resources should have been subject to an impacts analysis, an alternatives analysis to avoid or reduce impacts, and adequate mitigation for unavoidable significant impacts.</p> <p>Instead of conducting a proper analysis of the proposed project, the Authority continually deferred the required analysis to a "project-level" document.</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>This results in segmentation of the project and denies the public a full view of the potential impacts of the project.</p> <p>The Draft Program EIR/EIS ("Draft PEIR/S") lacks a full discussion of potential measures to avoid, reduce and/or mitigate impacts on the existing environment.</p> <p>CEQA requires agencies in every EIR to identify and focus on the possible significant environmental impacts of the project. Cal. Pub. Res. Code 21100(b)(1); 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15126, 15126.2.</p> <p>The very purpose of an EIR "is to identify the significant effects on the environment of a project, to identify alternatives to the project, and to indicate the manner in which those significant effects can be mitigated or avoided. Cal. Pub. Res. Code 21002.1(a).</p> <p>The purpose of an environmental impact report is to provide public agencies and the public in general with detailed information about the effect which a proposed project is likely to have on the environment; to list ways in which the significant effects of such a project might be minimized; and to indicate alternative to such a project.</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>CEQA requires agencies to include in every EIR a "detailed statement setting forth . . . significant effects on the environment of the proposed project," including both direct and indirect effects, as well as "growth-inducing impact of the proposed project." Cal. Pub. Res. Code 21100(b)(1).</p> <p>In addition, CEQA mandates that agencies analyze the cumulative impacts of a proposed project. 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15130(a).</p> <p>Specific Inadequacies Within the Draft PEIR/S</p> <p>Conversion of Farmland</p> <p>The Authority's discussion of the impacts caused by the conversion of farmland to other uses is inadequate.</p> <p>"Station Locations: The selection of preferred station locations is anticipated to be controversial. The HST system would be limited in the number of stations it could serve compared to other rail transit systems. In this Program EIR/EIS, many more potential sites are being considered than would be practical for HST operations. Moreover, there are trade-offs in comparing the alternative station options. For example, downtown terminals that promote high ridership and connectivity often have</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>considerable construction issues and high cost.” Emphasis added. (Pg. S-6)</p> <p>If station locations are anticipated to be controversial – they should be discussed at each and every level of analysis.</p> <p>Last sentence implies agency will be looking to locate stations in rural areas where costs will be lower. This will likely result in the conversion of agricultural resources and have growth-inducing impacts.</p> <p>Direct and Indirect Impacts</p> <p>CEQA requires the Authority to clearly identify and describe both direct and indirect significant effects of the project on the environment . . . giving due consideration to both the short-term and long-term effects. 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15126.2(a)</p> <p>The Authority simply ignores the secondary effects of the HST, namely, increase urbanization drawn to the Central Valley resulting in the conversion of farmland to other uses.</p> <p>“HST is the only alternative that would improve the travel options available in the Central Valley and other areas of the state with limited bus, rail, and air service for intercity trips.” (Pg. S-8)</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>Fresno to LA = 2:23 Sacramento to San Jose = 1:53 "The analysis shows that while the HST Alternative would have potentially significant environmental impacts on resources, including noise, biology, wetlands, and farmlands, the HST Alternative would have distinct benefits over the other alternatives in energy savings, reduced air emissions, and improved intercity travel conditions." (Pg. S-8)</p> <p>Ignoring the fact that increased population in the Central Valley will increase emissions from local travel miles.</p> <p>"The HST makes it that much easier for that growth to occur in the Central Valley thru the conversion of farmland." (Pg.3.7-6)</p> <p>"Existing Land Use: The existing land uses along the potential routes of the HST Alternative is predominantly agriculture, reflecting the Central Valley's heritage as one of the richest, most productive agricultural regions in the world (as discussed in Section 3.8, Agricultural Lands). Much of the land in the vicinity of the highway and rail corridors in the region proposed for improvements is cropland and</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

Comment Number	Date Received	Name	Address	Comments	Number	Response
				<p>orchards. Residential development comprises less than 10% of the land area, and commercial, service, and industrial uses together account for less than 10%." (Pg. 3.7-7)</p> <p>Analysis needed for growth-inducing impact of HST.</p> <p>Population is expected to increase by 46% (67 million) by 2020. &#61607;</p> <p>How does HST impact this projection?</p> <p>Cumulative Impacts</p> <p>CEQA requires that every EIR shall discuss cumulative impacts of a project when the project's incremental effect is cumulatively considered. 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15130(a).</p> <p>It is well established that one overwhelming consideration of CEQA is that environmental considerations do not become submerged by chopping a large project into many little ones – each with a minimal potential impact on the environment – which cumulatively may have disastrous consequences. <i>Bozung v. Local Agency Formation Com.</i>, 13 Cal.3d 263, 283-84 (Cal. 1975).</p> <p>"Should the HST advance to the next stage of analysis, subsequent phases of project development would include project-specific environmental analysis</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

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				<p>for a segment or segments and station locations of the proposed HST system.” (Pg. S-1)</p> <p>These station locations are clearly related to the proposed Project, and in fact, are vital to the success of the Project. CEQA requires that the Authority perform an environmental analysis at this level.</p> <p>“The Authority and the FRA continue to consider HST alignment and station options and have not identified a preference among those presented in this Draft Program EIR/EIS.” (S-8)</p> <p>The Authority is not required to identify a preference, but is required to the proper analysis of each alternative.</p> <p>“The significance of potential environmental impacts would need to be further determined at the next level of environmental review, and specific mitigation measures identified.” (Pg. S-9)</p> <p>Corridor travels right through prime agricultural region of the state, therefore, Authority is required to do some kind of analysis on impacts to agricultural resources.</p> <p>“The passenger cost for travel via the HST service would be lower than for travel by automobile or air for the same</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

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				<p>intercity markets.” (Pg. S-15)</p> <p>All of these features make it more desirable to commute from Central Valley to metro areas.</p> <p>“Will reduce “overall” air pollution.” (Pg. S-15)</p> <p>Great, but will likely increase and localize pollution in one of the areas of the state with the worst air pollution – San Joaquin Valley. Recently downgraded to “extreme” for ozone.</p> <p>More local trips to shop, drop kids off at school, soccer practice, etc.</p> <p>Loss of agriculture for development will decrease positive effects of crops on air.</p> <p>“The HST is expected to result in slightly greater increase in population than the other alternatives.” (S-15)</p> <p>Higher density development is still development and still results in farmland conversion to urban – where is this likely to occur?</p> <p>Greater increase in population – where?</p> <p>This agency has no control over local growth decisions so should present worst case scenario – inform the public of potential impacts.</p> <p>“In the Central Valley, one of the most active agricultural regions in the U.S.,</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

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				<p>the right-of-way requirements of the HST could potentially impact a maximum of 2,096 to 3,002 acres. Compared to the trend of farmland loss in California of 49,700 acres per year, or nearly 845,000 acres projected to be lost by 2020, the right-of-way needs of the HST would represent less than 0.4% of the total potential farmland loss. Furthermore, the indirect effect of the HST on urban growth would reduce conversion of farmlands by about 4,100 acres compared to other alternative.” Emphasis added. (Pg. S-15)</p> <p>Comparing farmland loss from urbanization to farmland loss from one construction project – deceptive.</p> <p>Growth-Inducing Impacts</p> <p>CEQA requires agencies to discuss the ways in which the proposed project could foster economic or population growth, or the construction of additional housing, either directly or indirectly, in the surrounding environment. 14 Cal. Code Regs. 15126.2(d), 15126(d); Cal. Pub. Res. Code 21100(b)(5). In analyzing whether a project will have growth-inducing impacts, courts consider whether the project has set in motion market forces that can create economic pressure for growth. See Stanislaus Audubon Soc’y. Inc. v. County of</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

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				<p>Stanislaus, 33 Cal.App.4th 144, 156-57 (Cal. Ct. App. 1995).</p> <p>Here, the growth-inducing force of cheaper, faster travel is clear. The market forces driving economic and population growth due to the Project required the Authority to analyze the growth-inducing impacts of the Project.</p> <p>"The number of passengers traveling intercity in California is forecasted to increase up to 63% over the next 20 years, from 155 million passengers to as many as 253 million passengers." (Pg. S-2)</p> <p>"By 2020, the proposed service would include approximately 86 weekday trains in each direction to serve the study area intercity travel market, with 64 of the trains running between northern and southern California and the remaining 22 trains serving shorter distance markets." Emphasis added. (Pg. S-4)</p> <p>22 trains serving shorter distance markets – where are stations?</p> <p>"All but 20 will make stops in the Central Valley to service commuters heading both north and south." (Pg. 2-25) "Forecasted ridership for this system varies between 42 and 68 million passengers (up to 10 million riders as long-distance commuters) for</p>		

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				<p>2020.” (Pg. 2-98)</p> <p>High growth-inducement for Central Valley towns with stations.</p> <p>“Most passenger service is assumed to run between 6:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m.” Emphasis added. (Pg. S-4)</p> <p>There should be no assumption as to running times – it should be part of the information provided in the Draft PEIR/S.</p> <p>The hours of service are “commuter” hours. Commuter hours require commuters . . . commuters desire/require affordable housing to make their commute worth while. For Bay Area and LA workforce, affordable housing will be in the Central Valley. Therefore, it is likely that more conversion of farmland will result from the proposed Project.</p> <p>“HST: Statewide population will grow by 700,000 more than No Project. Urbanized areas will grow by 48%, 2,600 ac less than No Project. Transit-oriented development around stations; planned growth consistent with RTPs; growth around Merced.” Emphasis added. (Pg. S-14)</p> <p>If urban areas growing less, does that means rural areas growing more – address?</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

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				<p>Where are these additional 700,000 people going to reside? Is it safe to assume that since that figure is related to the Project, they will be commuters?</p> <p>“Transit-oriented” development – discussion needed.</p> <p>“Compared to the state’s potential total or overall farmland loss of nearly 845,000 acres by 2020, the HST Alternatives would each represent less than 0.4% of the total potential farmland loss.” (Section 3.8.3)</p> <p>In reaching the 0.4% figure, the Authority compares 845,000 acres of farmland lost to urban development to between 1, 327 – 2,445 acres of farmland used for the construction of the HST. (3.8-11)</p> <p>The Authority should conduct a proper CEQA analysis including the growth-inducing impacts of this project and then compare that number to the growth-inducing impacts (845,000 acres) without the project.</p> <p>In its analysis of the Sacramento to Bakersfield Region, the Authority stated: “farmland severance impacts would potentially result, in addition to farmland conversion. While the precise amount of farmland potentially severed by the HST alignment options cannot be ascertained at this level of study.</p>		

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				<p>the HST alignment options on new alignments traversing farmland areas would have the potential to sever the vast majority of parcels traversed due to the curving nature of the alignments.” (3.8-14)</p> <p>The public cannot make informed decisions from the Authorities lack of analysis – as evidenced here.</p> <p>Mitigation</p> <p>Lead agencies must adopt feasible mitigation measures in order to substantially lessen or avoid otherwise significant adverse environmental impacts. Pub. Res. Code 21002, 21081(a); Cal. Code Regs. 15002(a)(3), 15021(a)(2), 15091(a)(1). To effectuate this requirement, EIRs must set forth mitigation measures that decision makers can adopt at the findings stage of the process. Pub. Res. Code 21100(b)(3); Cal. Code Regs. 15126(e), 15126.4. Formulation of mitigation measures should not be deferred until some future time. Cal. Code Regs 15126.4(a)(1)(B).</p> <p>“Subsequent Analysis: If the HST Alternative is selected, subsequent multimodal access and circulation studies could be conducted at proposed station areas along proposed alignments as plans for alignments.</p>		

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				<p>stations, and operations are refined. Addt'l environmental analysis would be required . . . Station area circulation studies would be expected as part of project-level environmental documentation." (Pg. 3.1-24)</p> <p>Stations, and their locations are essential to the success of this project – improper to defer analysis of impacts.</p> <p>The Authority is advocating segmenting the proposed Project into smaller projects thus avoiding a full impact analysis.</p> <p>Farmland section Includes only area within 50 ft on each side of alignment centerline (100 ft total). (Pg. S-9):</p> <p>No Project: Continued loss of farmland in California at rate of 49,700 ac per year from population growth and urbanization (845,000 ac by 2020).</p> <p>HST: Right-of-way needs could potentially impact a total of 2,445 to 3,860 ac of farmlands. New corridor alignments thru farmlands could have potential severance impacts.</p> <p>Does not discuss loss of farmland as No Project does. Mitigation to avoid or reduce impacts – share existing rights-of-way to the maximum extent possible and avoid alignment options in established farmlands. Consider</p>		

Table of Web Comments Received for the HSRA EIR/EIS

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				<p>farmland preservation strategy.</p> <p>The problem with this strategy is that it is only concerned with farmland lost to construction of the project – it does not address the growth-inducing impacts that are inevitable.</p> <p>“Potential impacts have been considered on a broad scale and on a system-wide basis . . . project-level review would analyze the potential for localized impacts.” (Pg. 3.7-26) “No mitigation strategies were discussed - all discussion deferred to “project-level” review.” (Pg. 3.7-26, 27)</p> <p>CEQA requires more – segmentation of project avoids a full impacts analysis.</p> <p>“Should the HST Alternative be selected, the subsequent environmental evaluations and project-level review of proposed segments and facilities would address the need for the following studies.” (Section 3.7.6)</p> <p>“Land use studies for specific alignment and station areas potentially impacted, including evaluation of potential land use conversion, potential growth, and potential community benefits.”</p> <p>CEQA intends EIR/EIS to provide information to the public – this documents defers its responsibility to provide any useful information</p>		