



Press Release

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Final Environmental Document for the Fresno to Bakersfield Project Section Made Available

Board of Directors to Consider Certification and Project Approval at May Meeting

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – Today the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) announced the availability of the Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS) for the Fresno to Bakersfield project section of the California High-Speed Rail project. The Final EIR/EIS represents a comprehensive, project-level review of the section that runs approximately 114 miles long from downtown Fresno to downtown Bakersfield with proposed stations in the Kings-Tulare County region and Bakersfield to go with a Fresno station location approved in 2012.

The Final EIR/EIS identifies the preferred alternative as parts of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe alternative (BNSF), the Corcoran Bypass alternative, the Allensworth Bypass alternative and the Bakersfield Hybrid alternative. Proposed stations are identified as the Downtown Bakersfield station on Truxtun Avenue, and the East of Hanford/west of Visalia station option located near State Route 198.

The Authority and FRA have prepared the Final EIR/EIS, which includes responses to comments received through the Draft EIR/EIS (released August 2011) and the Revised Draft EIR/EIS (released July 2012) review process. The Final EIR/EIS considers, describes and summarizes the potential environmental impacts of the proposed high-speed rail between Fresno and Bakersfield. The Final EIR/EIS also identifies mitigation measures, design practices, and further measures to guide the system's development and to avoid, where possible, or minimize potential adverse environmental impacts.

“The release of this document represents the culmination of a multi-year effort that included extensive environmental review, preliminary engineering and several opportunities for members of the communities along the alignment to participate in the process by providing feedback, public comments and frequent interaction with the project team,” said Authority CEO Jeff Morales.

On May 6 and May 7, the Authority's Board of Directors will host a two-day Board meeting at Fresno City Hall to take public comment and will consider certification of the Final EIR/EIS and approval of all or parts of the Fresno to Bakersfield section of the project.

Authority Board Meeting

Fresno City Hall
2600 Fresno Street
Fresno, CA 93721

May 6, 2014

3:00 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Staff Presentation and Public comment on the Final EIR/EIS

May 7, 2014

10:00 a.m.

Staff Presentation, Board Deliberation and Potential Action

Following the Authority Board of Director's action on May 7, the FRA will consider approving the Fresno to Bakersfield project section and issuing a Record of Decision related to the project and the Final EIR/EIS. That action is anticipated to occur in May or June 2014.

In August 2011, the Authority and FRA prepared a Draft EIR/EIS for the Fresno to Bakersfield project section and circulated it for public and agency review and comment. In response to stakeholder, agency and public feedback on the project section's alignment alternatives, the Authority and FRA decided that it would revise the Draft EIR/EIS to include additional route and station options. The Revised Draft EIR/Supplemental Draft EIS was circulated in July 2012. It evaluated new alignment alternatives and station locations west of Hanford, an additional alternative through Bakersfield, and refinements to the existing Fresno to Bakersfield alternative alignments. Throughout the process, the Authority has held over 850 meetings and technical working groups in counties and cities that will be impacted by the project, and will continue to work closely with all interested parties and the project moves forward.

The Final EIR/EIS and associated documents have been posted on the Authority's website at http://www.hsr.ca.gov/Programs/Environmental_Planning/final_fresno_bakersfield.html , the FRA website at www.fra.dot.gov.

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About California High-Speed Rail Authority

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is responsible for planning, designing, building and operation of the first high-speed rail system in the nation. California high-speed rail will connect the mega-regions of the state, contribute to economic development and a cleaner environment, create jobs and preserve agricultural and protected lands. By 2029, the system will run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in under three hours at speeds capable of over 200 miles per hour. The system will eventually extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations. In addition, the Authority is working with regional partners to implement a statewide rail modernization plan that will invest billions of dollars in local and regional rail lines to meet the state's 21st century transportation needs. To learn more visit the Authority's website at <http://www.hsr.ca.gov> and join us on [facebook.com/CaliforniaHighSpeedRail](https://www.facebook.com/CaliforniaHighSpeedRail) and follow us at twitter.com/cahsra