

## Agricultural Working Group January 13, 2012 Meeting Notes

**HST Section:** Fresno to Bakersfield and Fresno to Merced

**Meeting Date:** January 13, 2012

**Location:** [REDACTED]

**Purpose:** To help the California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) in addressing the key issues raised by the agricultural community.

**Participants:** John Diener, Chairman; Gerald Higginbotham, Madera and Fresno counties UCCE Dairy Advisor; Tim Niswander, Kings County Agricultural Commissioner (via telephone); Jim Dokken, Linder Equipment; Les Wright, Fresno County Ag Commissioner's Office (via telephone); Karen Francone, Environmental Program Manager, Central Regional Office, Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) (via telephone)

Jeff Abercrombie, CHSRA Area Program Manager

Rebecca Nicholas (via telephone) Public Outreach, URS; Cheryl Lehn, Public Outreach, URS

**Prepared by:** Cheryl Lehn

### Action Items

1. Finalize Pesticide white paper

### Decisions

1. The Agricultural Working Group (AWG) meeting notes for 7/29/11, 8/12/11, 8/25/11, and 9/7/11 are considered final meeting notes after completion of an independent technical review (ITR).
2. Meeting notes for 9/30/11, 10/28/11 and 11/8/11 have been sent to the AWG for final comments; no comments have been received. These meeting notes are under ITR and will be considered final upon ITR completion.
3. All of the above meeting notes will be placed on the AWG page on the CHSRA website as soon as the Independent Technical Review (ITR) process is complete ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)).

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4. The following attachments sent to the AWG received no additional comments and will be included as part of the AWG page on the CHSRA website ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)). Those attachments include:
  - a. The Central Valley Agricultural Working Group Overview dated July 2011. This document includes the structure, charge, and participation, summary of the agricultural community's issues, agricultural economics, and environmental considerations.
  - b. Ag community letter dated September 2, 2010 to CHSRA Chairman Pringle.
  - c. Components of the Cost of High-Speed Rail Built on Farmland, a list composed by a group of Kern County farmers. This item lists issues and impacts to be taken into consideration by the CHSRA.
5. The AWG determined the procedure for developing white papers and how they will be peer reviewed:
  - a. Once a white paper is been vetted through the AWG, the white paper becomes the product of AWG.
  - b. A cover letter will be signed by the AWG Chairman, John Diener.
  - c. The cover letter and white paper will be reviewed by the AWG before it goes through the peer review process.
  - d. A draft of the letter for requesting the peer reviewer will first be sent to the AWG for review.
  - e. All white papers were revised to contain this format:
    - a. Background
    - b. Issue
    - c. Discussion
    - d. Conclusions
    - e. References

### **Status of White Papers**

Chairman Diener asked Tim Niswander to present the white paper on pesticides. Niswander introduced Karen Francone from the Department of Pest Regulation (DPR), who was helpful when she reviewed the white paper. Niswander commented that the San Joaquin Valley Agricultural Commissioners had contributed to the white paper, and wanted them to be recognized for their efforts.

Jeff Abercrombie asked if this white paper could include a reference to Ag Commissioner involvement, so that it would not be an opinion document, but one produced by experts and regulators in agricultural pesticides, or a letter from DPR to the CHSRA.

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Francone commented she could ask the new Department of Pest Regulation's (DPR) branch chief to authorize participation of the DPR in the preparation of the pesticide white paper for the AWG.

Niswander is revising a portion of the pesticides white paper and will forward the revised copy to the group.

Francone suggested that the pesticide use impacts white paper be reviewed by professional pesticide organizations such as the California Association of Pest Control Advisors, Pesticide Applicators Professional Organization, California Aerial Aircraft Association and University of California Directors. Abercrombie suggested that the group ask for Shannon Mueller's suggestions regarding University of California Cooperative Extension. Les Wright suggested that the following groups be considered for external review; Farm Bureaus, Nisei Farmers League, Raisin Bargaining Association, Grape and Tree Fruit League.

The AWG reviewed the procedure for producing white papers and getting them reviewed externally. Issues and questions included:

1. Who should sign the cover letter requesting a peer review?
2. Will the cover letter come from the entire AWG? Will it be signed by Chairman Diener? Should it be signed by the author of the white paper?
3. Will the white paper name the author of the paper, or will it come from the AWG?
4. Shouldn't the reviewer be technical in nature, rather than marketing?

### **White Paper on Induced Wind**

Abercrombie would like to discuss whether the following topics should be singular white paper or be combined into one white paper:

1. Impacts on pollination/blossoms
2. Impacts on bees
3. Impacts from dust
4. Impacts from drift

Abercrombie distributed information regarding induced wind to the AWG. The topics above are all relative to the expected induced wind. Induced wind needs to be introduced as the condition creating impacts. Abercrombie has drafted a summary from two memoranda calculating wind speed, and provided them to the AWG.

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The AWG discussed combining wind speed with induced wind in the same white paper. The AWG felt they could be combined and agreed that these white papers should include the wind speed summary distributed by Abercrombie.

Abercrombie will send Francone, at the Department of Pesticide Regulations, the back-up materials he referred to in the induced wind white paper. Abercrombie and Lehn will meet with Francone next week to discuss.

### **Agricultural Equipment Transport and Movement Impacts**

Dokken presented the white paper on agricultural equipment transport and movement impacts. Dokken said it is difficult to cover all the equipment that may be used by agriculture. He used an average range for height, width and weight.

Abercrombie wants to include information about what the High-Speed Rail will be using for road width standards in the white paper. He stated the CHSRA would use county standards and this would result in 40-foot-wide bridges. The CHSRA needs to be sure that is a safe width. The CHSRA takes a traffic-flow point of view to determine how many over-crossings may be needed. Bridge widths may become a compensation issue for those that that may have to go around the HSR to get to the other side of their property. The AWG recommends that the CHSRA should consider private crossings where severed property becomes a hardship. These are right-of-way process issues.

Per discussion, Dokken will add the following to the equipment white paper:

1. Gradient statement
2. Recommendation; consideration should be given to private crossings and overcrossings when there are impacts to grower operations.

### **Dairy Issues as Related to Noise and Vibrations from HSR White Paper**

Gerald Higginbotham distributed additional electromagnetic field-related studies on milk production. These studies were peer reviewed, in contrast to a study previously distributed and submitted as part of DEIR/S comments.

The AWG discussed the issue of stray electrical current. Higginbotham recommended that the CHSRA should have a policy for testing on a regular basis. Abercrombie distributed a letter that the CHSRA received from a Hanford dairy and asked if our past dairy discussions have covered all these issues. AWG will review.



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Higginbotham will conform his white paper to the established white paper format. He will also address stray current and EMF. Higginbotham will send this information to Abercrombie in 2 weeks.

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 25, 2012 at 1:00 p.m.