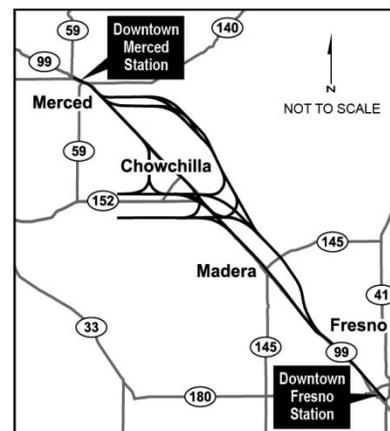


# PUBLIC NOTICE

## NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY AND NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARINGS MERCED TO FRESNO HIGH-SPEED TRAIN DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIR/EIS)

**PROPOSED PROJECT AND LOCATION:** A Statewide Program EIR/EIS (tier 1) was certified in November 2005 as the first phase of a tiered environmental review process for the proposed California high-speed train system (HST system) planned to provide a reliable high-speed electric-powered train system that links the major metropolitan areas of the state and that delivers predictable and consistent travel times. A further objective is to provide an interface with commercial airports, mass transit, and the highway network and to relieve capacity constraints of the existing transportation system as increases in intercity travel demand in California occur, in a manner sensitive to and protective of California's unique natural resources. The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority), with the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), has prepared a Draft EIR/EIS that further examines the Merced to Fresno Section of the HST system at the project level (tier 2), within Merced, Madera, and Fresno counties. The project examined is construction and operation of a grade-separated, dedicated double-track, electric powered, passenger, steel-wheel-on-steel-rail, high-speed railroad between Merced and Fresno, including stations in downtown Merced and Fresno and a potential heavy maintenance facility. This Draft EIR/EIS describes a no project alternative and HST alternatives (including alignment, station, and heavy maintenance facility alternatives), and identifies potential adverse impacts, benefits and mitigation measures.



**ANTICIPATED IMPACTS:** Significant environmental effects are anticipated in the following areas: transportation; air quality and global climate change; noise and vibration; electromagnetic fields and electromagnetic interference; public utilities and energy; biological resources and wetlands; hazardous materials and wastes; safety and security; communities; agricultural lands; parks, recreation, and open space; aesthetics and visual resources; and cultural and paleontological resources.

**HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES:** The project would cross seven sites on hazardous waste lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. Those sites are Bartlett Petroleum (Cardlock, 1450 G Street, Merced), Smiley's Shell (1405 Martin Luther King Jr. Way/1405 J Street, Merced), Caltrans Maintenance Yard (1385 N West Avenue, Fresno), Klein's Truck Stop/E-Z Trip (Herndon Enterprises) (6725 Golden State Boulevard, Fresno), UPRR Fresno Yard (3135 N Weber Street, Fresno), VOPAK USA, Inc./Univar USA (1152 G Street, Fresno), and Abandoned Service Station (655 G Street, Fresno).

**PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD:** The Draft EIR/EIS is being made available to the public in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act for a 45-day comment period. During the comment period, written comments may be submitted via mail to "Merced to Fresno Draft EIR/EIS Comment", 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA 95814; through the Authority's website [[www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)]; or via email to [merced\\_fresno@hsr.ca.gov](mailto:merced_fresno@hsr.ca.gov) with the subject line "Draft EIR/EIS Comment". The comment period is from (and including) August 15 to September 28, 2011. **Comments must be received electronically, or postmarked, on or before September 28, 2011.**

The information in the Draft EIR/EIS and comments received will be considered by the Authority and FRA when they identify the preferred HST alignment alternative and station location options for the Merced to Fresno Section of the proposed California HST system. The Authority and FRA will prepare a Final EIR/EIS, which will include responses to comments received and a description of the preferred alignment and station location options.

**PUBLIC HEARINGS:** The Authority and FRA invite you to attend the public hearings that have been scheduled to receive comments from the public and public agencies on the Draft EIR/EIS and the HST alternatives it discusses. Each hearing will have open doors from 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. The hearings will include a short open house portion and presentation regarding the Draft EIR/EIS comment process, then a public hearing during which members of the public can formally submit an oral comment on the Draft EIR/EIS. Written comments also may be submitted at the hearing. Spanish translations will be provided; if you have other special needs such as for the hearing impaired, please call (916) 414-1582 in advance of the meetings. All public hearings will be wheelchair accessible. Below is a list of hearing dates and locations:

- Merced: September 14, 2011 – Merced Community Senior Center, 755 West 15th Street, Merced, CA 95340
- Madera: September 15, 2011 – Madera City Council Chambers, 205 West 4th Street, Madera, CA 93637
- Fresno: September 20, 2011 – Fresno Convention Center, 848 M Street, Fresno, CA 93721

Please call the Authority at (916) 324-1541 or check the Authority website ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)) for more information, including up to date information on planned hearings.

**COPIES OF THE DRAFT EIR/EIS:** Visit the Authority website ([www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov](http://www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov)) or the FRA website ([www.fra.dot.gov](http://www.fra.dot.gov)), where you may view and download the Draft EIR/EIS. The Authority website also contains technical reports underlying the Draft EIR/EIS. You may also request a CD-ROM of the Draft EIR/EIS by calling (916) 414-1582. Printed copies of the Draft EIR/EIS have been placed in the following locations: Fresno County Public Library, Central Branch (2420 Mariposa Street, Fresno); Madera County Library (121 North G Street, Madera); Chowchilla Branch Library (Madera County Library) (300 Kings Avenue, Chowchilla); Merced Community Senior Center (755 West 15th Street, Merced); Merced County Library (2100 O Street, Merced); Galilee Missionary Baptist Church (22941 Fairmead Boulevard, Chowchilla); Le Grand Branch Library (12949 Le Grand Road, Le Grand); Lao Family Community (855 West 15th Street, Merced); Madera Ranchos Branch Library (37167 Avenue 12, Suite 4C, Madera); Merced County Los Banos Branch Library (1312 South Seventh Street, Los Banos); and Atwater Branch Library (1600 Third Street, Atwater). A printed copy of the Draft EIR/EIS also is available for review during business hours at the Authority's offices at 770 L Street, Suite 800, Sacramento, CA.

The Authority does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

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