



CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL RESOLUTION #20-08

Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye

Direct Authority Chief Executive Officer to Issue the Supplemental Record of Decision for the Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Selecting the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative and Complying With Other Federal Laws.

Whereas, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (“Authority”) has adopted Resolution # HSRA 20-06, describing the Authority and Federal Railroad Administration (“FRA”) tiered environmental review process pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (“CEQA”) and National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), for the high-speed rail (“HSR”) system; the 2012 Final EIR/EIS for the Merced to Fresno Section of the HSR system; and the Authority decision selecting the Hybrid Alternative for the north-south alignment of the Merced to Fresno Section and station locations in downtown Merced and downtown Fresno, but deferring a decision on the railroad wye alignment within the geographic area of the Merced to Fresno section bounded by Avenue 19 ½ on the south, Buchanan Hollow Road on the north, and Road 8 on the west to allow for further evaluation of wye alternatives;

Whereas, FRA issued a Record of Decision on September 18, 2012 selecting the Hybrid Alternative for the north-south alignment of the Merced to Fresno Section and station locations in downtown Merced and downtown Fresno, but deferring a decision on the railroad wye alignment within the geographic area of the Merced to Fresno section bounded by Avenue 19 ½ on the south, Buchanan Hollow Road on the north, and Road 8 on the west, as shown in Figure 3 of the Record of Decision;

Whereas, based on additional project planning and engineering that has occurred since 2012, and extensive stakeholder outreach, the Authority, in consultation with FRA, further considered seventeen alternatives for the Central Valley Wye and determined that four wye alternatives merited further detailed study;

Whereas, the Authority and the FRA determined it was appropriate to evaluate the Central Valley Wye alternatives through a supplement to the 2012 Final EIR/EIS, consistent with State CEQA Guidelines sections 15162 and 15163 and with the regulations implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (“NEPA”), specifically 40 C.F.R. 1502.9;

Whereas, in January of 2017, the Authority Board received a staff briefing on the four wye alternatives advanced for detailed study and designated the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternatives as the Preferred Alternative to be identified in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS for CEQA purposes, in Resolution #HSRA 17-01;

Whereas, the Authority circulated the Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS for a 48-day CEQA public review and comment period between May 3, 2019, and June 20, 2019;

Whereas, under 23 United States Code section 327, the FRA and the State of California executed a NEPA Assignment Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”), dated July 23, 2019, pursuant to which the State of California, acting through the California State Transportation Agency and the Authority, assumed FRA’s responsibilities under NEPA and other federal environmental laws, for projects necessary for the design, construction, and operation of the California HSR System;

Whereas, on September 17, 2019, through Resolution #HSRA 19-09, the Board delegated to the Chief Executive Officer the authority to include in a Draft EIS the preferred alternative the Board has previously designated for purposes of a Draft EIR prior to NEPA assignment;

Whereas, pursuant to the NEPA Assignment MOU, the Authority circulated the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS for a 45-day NEPA review period between September 13, 2019, and October 28, 2019;

Whereas, the Authority has completed and issued the Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (“EIR/EIS”);

Whereas, the Final Supplemental EIR/EIS evaluates the impacts and benefits of implementing four Central Valley Wye alternatives, each of which connects to the Hybrid Alternative north-south alignment portion of the Merced to Fresno Section the Federal Railroad Administration selected in its Record of Decision dated September 18, 2012; and

Whereas, the Final Supplemental EIR/EIS identifies the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative as the “Preferred Alternative” for the Central Valley Wye portion of the Merced to Fresno Section, which is depicted on the maps included in the Draft Supplemental Record of Decision for the Merced to Fresno Section, attached hereto as Exhibit “A”.

Therefore, it is resolved:

- a. The Board approves the Draft Supplemental Record of Decision for the Merced to Fresno Section selecting the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative and complying with other federal laws;
- b. The Board directs the Chief Executive Officer as follows:
 - a. to sign the Draft Supplemental Record of Decision for the Merced to Fresno Section and issue it as a Final Supplemental Record of Decision reflecting the final decision of the Authority Board, including any required notices pursuant to NEPA or other federal laws;
 - b. to take any other necessary steps to obtain all permits, approvals, and rights that would allow for construction and operation.
 - c. to work in partnership with Madera County, the City of Chowchilla, the Community of Fairmead, Chowchilla Elementary School District, and other regional stakeholders as the Central Valley Wye portion of the Merced to Fresno Section is implemented.

Vote: 9

Yes: Richards; Schenk; Camacho; Miller; Perea; Ghielmetti; Escutia; Butros; Williams

No: 0

Absent: N/A

Date: September 10, 2020

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