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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0518

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The Honorable Curt Pringle
Chairman
High Speed Rail Authority
925 L Street, Suite 1425
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Mr. Pringle,

I am writing to encourage the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) to proceed with further review of route A-2 for the Merced to Fresno segment of California's High Speed Rail. Route A-2 meets the CHSRA's guiding principles to select alignments along existing transportation corridors and is also the most cost effective and efficient option. I encourage completion of this analysis in an expeditious fashion so that the State of California's application for funding under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act can be competitive. Adding additional routes to the review process at this late stage will impede our region's ability to secure these funds, so it is essential that CHSRA move forward with this review without further delay.

CHSRA staff's recommendation for the Merced to Fresno Alternatives Analysis is the result of a thorough public process, including scoping sessions in 2008 and a workshop in October, 2009. Of all the routes under consideration, Route A-2 shows the greatest potential to meet the CHSRA's guiding principles, which provide "The system will maximize the use of existing transportation corridors and railroad rights of way in order to minimize the impacts on California's treasured landscape." The Greater Merced County High Speed Rail Committee, Merced County and the City of Merced have identified A-2 as being the cost effective, providing the greatest efficiency, causing the least amount of impact to farmland and other planning processes. A-2 clearly needs to be the focus of the CHSRA's review.

Furthermore, additional review of alternatives A-1, A-3 and A4 will delay the process for selection of the Merced to Fresno route, impacting the state's application for federal stimulus funds. These routes would also result in significant increases in cost, impacts to farmland and slower travel times.

Again, I urge your expeditious review of A-2 for the Merced to Fresno segment. Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



DENNIS CARDOZA
Member of Congress

Cc: Mehdi Morshed
Carrie Bowen