

RECEIVED JUN 15 2010

8

June 15, 2010

Madera County Board of Supervisors:

Tom Wheeler, Chairman

Frank Bigelow

Ron Dominici

Vern Moss

Max Rodrigues

RE: High Speed Rail proposed Routes A-1 & A-2

Gentlemen,

I have reviewed Mr. Ahmed's letter to RMA Director Beach. I find it amazing that he makes no mention of the potential hardships placed on the agricultural constituents of our community and county.

I further note that his assumption that A-1 meets legislated travel time is subject to question since we were told that it was over their mandated time minimum, as opposed to A-2 which hits the mark.

The Madera County Board of Supervisors is the only governmental agency responsible for safeguarding the interests and well being of our agricultural base. Agriculture has its own specific needs quite different from incorporated areas of the county. To take a position endorsing any route with the scanty factual information available today would be untimely and irresponsible.

A-1 does not fulfill the mandate given the HSR Authority to adhere to existing transportation corridors as it requires an additional estimated 15-20 miles of new track to connect UP to BNSF on the North in Merced County and on the south where it returns again to UP below Madera. These connections traverse and thus eliminate rich agricultural land, disrupting farming operations and residences, as well as commercial properties. It is inconsistent to contemplate this alternative considering that proposed routes A-3 and A-4 were eliminated from study because of their impact on ag lands.

HSR Engineering design is currently reported to be only 3 to 15% complete leaving unidentified answers to many vital concerns such as:

- A-1 is proposed to be built at grade which jeopardizes no less than 20 county roads with closure. There has been no indication by county planning staff as to which will remain open and which will be abandoned. Fire, public safety and school transportation access must be evaluated. Existing private crossings must also be considered as their

termination will land-lock properties and/or cause unacceptable alternatives for split parcels and farming operations. The possibility of grievance suits against our fiscally strapped county (and ultimately overburdened taxpayers) is another serious consequence to be weighed.

- Methods and costs of mitigation measures have not been defined nor articulated to those potentially affected.
- Environmental studies are not completed nor assessed.

Conclusions:

We reaffirm our endorsement of Alternative A-2 and strongly oppose alternative A-1.

We totally oppose the selection of the Kochina Heavy Maintenance Facility site. It would destroy significant farmland, disrupt the Chowchilla Water District's distribution system, create negative environmental impacts, and unacceptable disruption to the properties in our neighborhood.

We favor the adoption of the median of Hwy 152 for the East/West corridor with expansion of that right of way where necessary. This would greatly diminish the loss to private land holdings and allow access to Federal and State funding to adapt the existing interchanges on Hwy 99.

Respectfully,



Millie Meders

C: Carrie Bowen, HSR Authority