

Train Riders Association of California (TRAC)

DRAFT Board Resolution

August 23, 2013

1. The Train Riders Association of California (TRAC) strongly supports a modern High-Speed Rail (HSR) system for California. HSR will be critical in providing interregional mobility to a growing population at a lower environmental impact than widening highways and adding runways. Successful HSR should greatly benefit the economy.
2. Even if the current Merced-Bakersfield project were successfully completed (spending \$6 billion in 5 years of construction is an exceptional challenge), no funding is available to build the rest of the system. That would leave this very expensive track unused and unusable, except perhaps by Amtrak.
3. Funding is a problem because the Authority's plans were not attractive to private investors. The Authority hopes that \$26 billion of federal grants will lead to private investment, but the Sacramento Superior Court ruling found that "there is, in reality, no reasonably anticipated time of receipt for any of the potential new federal funds."
4. TRAC is grateful for the Sacramento Superior Court ruling that the Authority's project did not meet the taxpayer protection requirements of the 2008 voter-approved HSR bond measure, Proposition 1A. Preventing the current project from spending bond funds illegally will preserve the potential for HSR in California.
5. California needs a realistic and achievable HSR plan. Only experienced HSR operators have the ability to develop commercially viable HSR systems. An operator to partner with should be sought by the state to develop HSR.
6. An economically successful HSR system will create far more construction jobs and will support high-quality long-term jobs, unlike the current project.
7. The first priority should be filling gaps in the California passenger rail network, the most significant of which is between the Los Angeles area and Bakersfield. The Tejon/Grapevine route is much faster and far more economical than the Authority's route via Palmdale.
8. For those interested in the future of HSR, TRAC will offer presentations on these issues at its November 2 annual meeting in Hanford. Tickets are available at trac.eventbrite.com.
9. To make a tax-deductible contribution to support TRAC's work, visit <http://www.calrailnews.com>, and click the PayPal tab.