



December 22, 2014

SUBJECT: IMMEDIATE ELIMINATION OF EAST CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES FROM PALMDALE TO BURBANK PROJECT SECTION AND REVISION/IMPROVEMENT OF SR 14 ALTERNATIVES

Dear Chairman Richard, Board Members, CEO Jeff Morales and Southern California Regional Coordinator Michelle Boehm:

(Copies to: Congressman Schiff, Congressman Cardenas, Congresswoman Chu, Senator Liu, Assemblywoman Lopez, Assemblyman Wilk, Senator Hertzberg, Supervisor Antonovich, Supervisor Kuehl, Councilman Fuentes, Councilwoman Martinez, Councilman Krekorian, Mayor Garcetti, Burbank Mayor Gordon, U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers, Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Transportation, Sierra Club – Los Angeles Chapter, Hillside Federation, San Gabriel Mountains Forever)



[Pictured: the decimation of our residential Foothill communities and equestrian lifestyle as proposed by HSR's East Corridor alternatives. From left to right: bridge/tunnel entering Shadow Hills; bridge spanning Big Tujunga Wash; bridge/tunnel entering Lake View Terrace; bridge/tunnel entering San Gabriel Mountains/Angels National Forest.]

ACTION REQUESTED

The Foothill communities of Shadow Hills, Lake View Terrace, Kagel Canyon, La Tuna Canyon, Sunland/Tujunga and Sun Valley have had enough. It's now the holiday season and our lives have been disrupted non-stop since mid-August when the non-specific, "new study alternative/yellow banana" for the Palmdale to Burbank segment was introduced and again recently when the updated SR 14 Corridor and three, new East Corridor alternatives were introduced. The new East Corridor alternatives were not in Prop 1A (voter-approved ballot measure) and violate the legislation by stretching the "definition" of what constitutes a clear, well-defined transportation and utility corridor. The East Corridor alternatives also have not been the subject of many years of planning and millions of dollars of research as were the SR 14 alternatives. Thus, we conclude the Authority is acting with far too much haste, and far too little regard, for the impacts created upon communities by their alternatives. The Authority continues to communicate these new alternatives very poorly, and is forcing decisions in a compressed time period. Thus, our claims of being "attacked, blindsided and thrown under the train," as conveyed at the Authority's September board meeting in Palmdale, continue to be warranted.

Local residents have taken days off of work and away from family responsibilities; community organizations have suspended normal activities; individuals have curtailed community-serving volunteer activities; real estate transactions and investments have been slowed or canceled; and we all have lived in a state of shock and anxiety getting educated on the project and fearing for the next steps of the High Speed Rail Authority. We are frustrated and angered to have this issue continuing to threaten our communities and residents during the holiday period.

Thus, after much research, much discussion and much analysis, the communities referenced above request communication, by the end of 2014, from the High Speed Rail Authority committing to the **elimination** of all three of the recently announced "East Corridor" alternatives (E1, E2 and E3 which replaced the "yellow banana") within the Palmdale to Burbank project section from any further project and EIR/EIS consideration.

Further, as we have studied and traveled the SR 14 and East Corridors, and attended meetings in Santa Clarita, Sylmar, Burbank, San Fernando and Shadow Hills, we have found serious flaws in the plans as far north as the Palmdale and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and Angeles National Forest, and as far south as San Fernando Road and Burbank Airport, which preclude them from further consideration. These include: the intrusion into the new National Monument and Angeles National Forest; the present design of the at-grade and elevated rail sections along San Fernando Road which devastate communities such as Sun Valley, Pacoima, San Fernando and Burbank; and the tunneled approaches to Burbank Airport which encounter a myriad of serious issues related to a Superfund site, the 5 Freeway, the Burbank Western Channel and Burbank Airport (involving Federal agencies such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Federal Aviation Administration, U.S. Department of Homeland Security and the Army Corps of Engineers). Among

the most significant, unavoidable and unfathomable impacts of these highly tunneled approaches are the more than one million diesel truck trips (on inadequate road/bridge infrastructure) that would be created as part of the dirt excavation and equipment transport process.

We've worked closely with these communities on local quality of life matters such as redistricting, landfill closures, clean up of the trash/recycling industry and diesel truck traffic in the past few years. Together, we are referred to as "communities of interest" and we stick together and work together. Residents and businesses throughout the San Fernando Road corridor, and throughout the Northeast San Fernando Valley, are overburdened with industrial infrastructure and cannot bear further environmental and quality of life degradation. To date, the negatives far outweigh the positives for the High Speed Rail proposals we have reviewed.

Thus, we do not support or endorse ANY of the proposed HSR routes from Palmdale to Burbank at this time, a position we are confident our elected officials will agree with and support. One of the goals of HSR is to unify California and to bring our communities closer together, but the presentation of these alternate routes and the manner in which HSR has conducted itself with affected communities has achieved the opposite effect: dividing communities and pitting them against one another as they are forced to fight to protect their interests. We refuse to be put in the position where any of our communities must choose the lesser of potential evils, or to be pitted against one another. We respect our neighbors too much to simply adopt a NIMBY attitude. We insist that HSR engineers go back to the drawing board and do better work. HSR has a duty to explore feasible alternatives, not disastrous or illegal alternatives that explore loopholes or exceed the limits of protective legislation such as that which created our National Monument, National Forests and CEQA/NEPA.

At the same time, we insist that HSR commit greater resources to communicating with impacted communities by retaining consultants possessing experience in and who are sensitive to our Southern California communities. Frankly, we've met too many HSR consultants from outside the United States and California who have no feel for this market from a social or political perspective. How else could routes E1, E2 and E3 ever have seen the light of day? It's time HSR view voter approval and public funding as less of a mandate to meet deadlines and more of a responsibility to do the job right, regardless of the time it takes.

In addition, we call upon the Authority to retain independent, locally-attuned financial and real estate counsel, at the Authority's cost, to assess and to refund the short and long-term damages (financial, real estate, psychological and reputation) incurred by property owners in our Foothill communities resulting from the Authority's negligent handling of the introduction of the East Corridor alternatives. This process began in mid-August and the damages compound every day the flawed alternatives, developed solely by HSR engineers and consultants, devoid of local community input, are in existence. We repeat, eliminate the East Corridor alternatives immediately, without further delay.

BACKGROUND

The selection of, first, the undefined “yellow banana,” followed by the three East Corridor options, have been unequivocal disasters for our communities and a waste of time and public funds by the High Speed Rail Authority. After being blindsided by the undefined, non-specific, approximately 400-square mile “yellow banana” in mid-August, 2014, many residents, who took uncompensated time off of work, testified at the Board’s September meeting in Palmdale trying to enlighten the Board about the magnitude of HSR’s mistake. More than 1,000 individuals/organizations provided more than 6,000 comments about the Palmdale to Burbank project section during the EIR/EIS scoping period, with the vast majority of those comments critical of the “yellow banana” alternative. We’ve yet to see any HSR responses to those comments...yet HSR moved forward, with no ongoing community input, to create the fatally-flawed East Corridor alternatives E1, E2 and E3. Since August 2014, despite voluminous communications to the Authority Board, we’ve received nothing more than a single form letter from the Authority with apologies for its tardiness. And, as evidenced by the flaws in the new East Corridor alternatives, we have received nothing more than lip service from local HSR staff and consultants.

Shortly after the Board’s September meeting in Palmdale, President Obama, with overwhelming public and political support throughout Southern California, designated the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument. Instead of acquiescing to and respecting the will of the people for preservation of the environmentally sensitive lands protected by the National Monument and the Angeles National Forest, HSR plowed further ahead to seek declaratory relief from CEQA, issued RFQs for and selected contractors in the Palmdale to Burbank project section, created the new East Corridor to explore tunneling, at-grade and elevated rail routes through these protected lands, researched “Special Use Permits” through the new National Monument, and pursued “Cooperation Agreements” with entities such as the U.S. Forest Service.

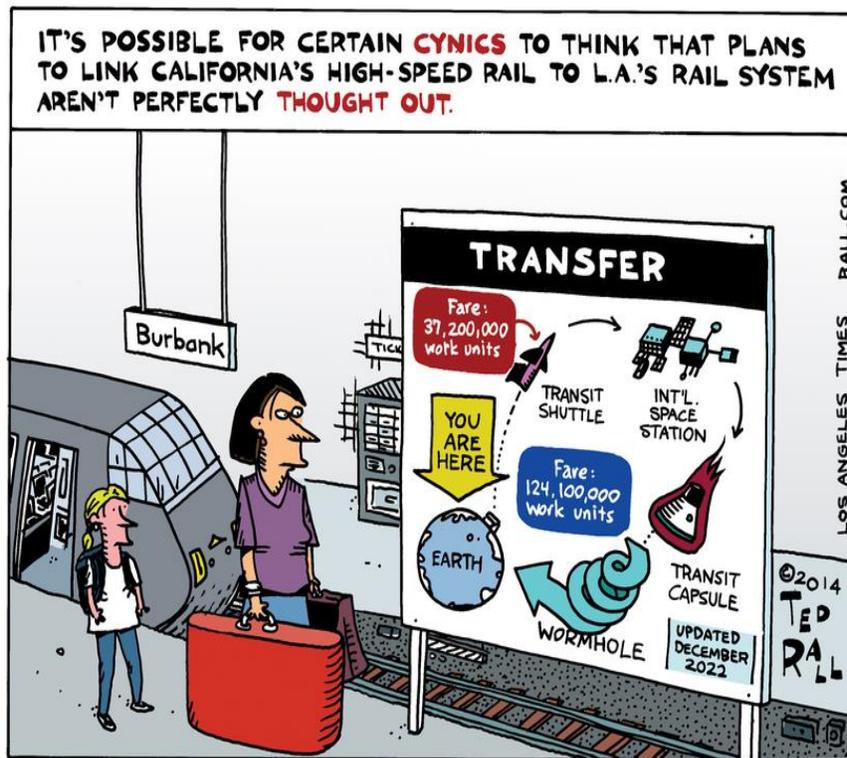
HSR staff and a myriad of consultants, elected officials and community leaders witnessed our communities’ shock and outrage at the December 3rd HSR meeting held in Shadow Hills which was attended by more than 300 angry and emotional residents. Many of our residents and leaders attended multiple open house meetings to become further informed and to make sure HSR staff and consultants heard our voices. The meetings were poorly planned and executed: there was no community input into or review of the final product or revised SR 14 and new East Corridor alternatives prior to their release on December 2; although elected officials were briefed the week of November 17, 2014, the information was embargoed from community leaders and the public for two weeks, including the Thanksgiving holiday, until the start of HSR meetings on December 2; community leaders were rebuffed after offering several times to provide input to the newest round of alternatives prior to their release; and then the meetings were structured in a manner that *intentionally* stifled public comment and discussion. Legitimate and thoughtful questions posed from the community to the HSR representatives were met by scripted answers such as, “We don’t know;” “It’s only conceptual at this time;” or “It’s a process.” There was no recording of the meeting or full capture of the hundreds of questions posted. The meetings should have allowed both public comment *and* station-to-

station information gathering. As an aide to our County Supervisor suggested, the meetings were like “Chamber mixers.”

As a sad commentary, we, the impacted communities, had to travel to Santa Clarita on Tuesday, December 2, for our FIRST introduction to the East Corridor alternatives on a stormy, rainy evening in a distant community. By then, elected officials had been briefed two weeks earlier, materials conveying the new alternatives had been printed, the Santa Clarita audience witnessed the new alternatives, and HSR’s website was carrying the new information...all before our impacted Foothills communities knew anything.

As we discussed with the HSR project manager for this section, Michelle Boehm, and HSR’s outreach consultant, Genoveva Arrellano, we reject being part of an iterative process controlled and manipulated by HSR, when the only path to success is a *cooperative* process in which community input is sought after and respected in a transparent manner. We are glad the Authority has agreed to our recent recommendation to create Community Advisory Committees to change the communications dynamic. We encourage HSR to move quickly in that direction and we will participate earnestly if our present requests are honored.

Apparently, the Los Angeles Times shares our concern, frustration and bewilderment with the HSR process:



OUR POSITION ON PALMDALE TO BURBANK PROJECT SECTION EAST CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES

It is very apparent that HSR has the “cart ahead of the horse” at this juncture in this region...pun intended...from both an engineering/design and communications standpoint, and is struggling to develop the right strategy to build and communicate within densely populated communities. It was shocking to us that HSR, with its vast array of financial, engineering, technical and political/communications resources, could propose the flawed Corridors E1, E2 and E3.

For starters, each of the East Corridor alternatives violates the premise and spirit of the **San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and Angeles National Forest**, and we challenge whether the routes legally adhere to the definition of “existing transportation and utility corridors” as required by the enabling legislation and Proposition 1A, as approved narrowly by California voters. The East Corridor alternatives tunnel directly under the heart of the residential, equestrian communities of Shadow Hills, La Tuna Canyon, Lake View Terrace, Kagel Canyon, Sun Valley and Burbank. These alternatives create damage of varying degrees to nearby Sunland/Tujunga, Pacoima and San Fernando, affecting equestrians and recreation enthusiasts from throughout LA County who use the Northeast San Fernando Valley for their equestrian and varied recreation pursuits. The overall reputation, quality of life and historic equestrian culture of our Foothill communities would be decimated by the construction of multiple, gaping tunnel openings and an elevated rail line over our flood plain, equestrian trail network and recreation/open space areas. In addition, the local equestrian-related economy (which exceeds \$100 million in value annually, not including equestrian real estate nor indirect economic benefits) consisting of horse sales, boarding, feeding, shoeing/trim, trucks, trailers, veterinarians and insurance would be devastated. This economic loss does not include the permanent property value and other non-equestrian-related sales tax loss that the State and local government agencies would lose due to HSR’s use of eminent domain and devaluation of “survivor” properties.

We have projected the severe damage created by HSR’s East Corridor proposal, however preliminary or conceptual HSR intended, in its construction and operational phases. This comprehensive analysis, similar to but far less costly than an EIR/EIS, should lead you to eliminate the East Corridor alternatives immediately from further consideration.

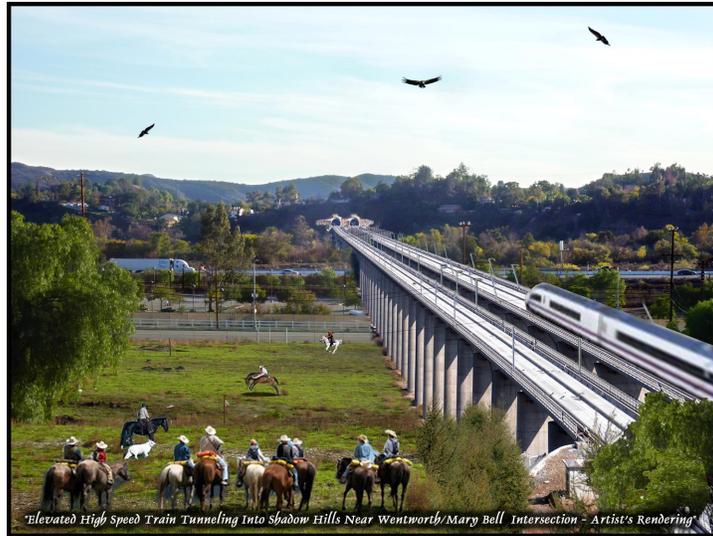
We also believe HSR has a fiduciary responsibility to the State and its taxpayers to operate efficiently per the legislation. Already, the introduction and study of far-fetched and flawed alternatives such as E1, E2 and E3 represents a waste of time and *taxpayer* monies. Including these infeasible alternatives in the EIR/EIS will compound the wastefulness as well as raise serious legal issues related to NEPA and CEQA.

We have organized our analysis so that the most heavily impacted communities/open space areas are discussed:

- Shadow Hills/La Tuna Canyon/Sun Valley
- Lake View Terrace
- Kagel Canyon
- Big Tujunga Wash/Hansen Dam Recreation Area
- San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and Angeles National Forest

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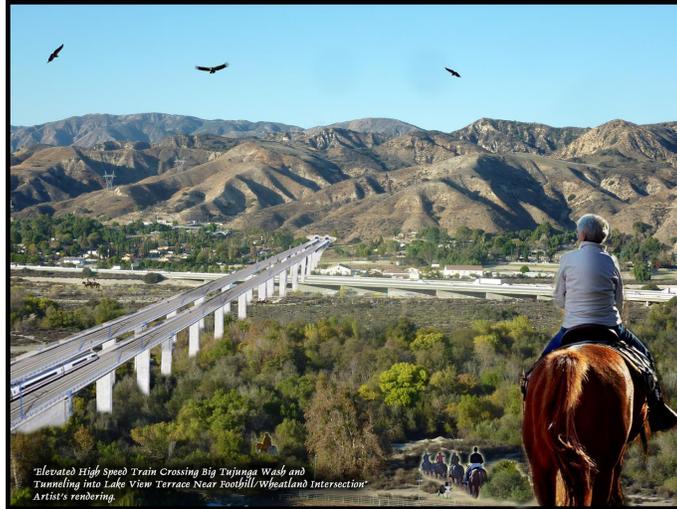
1. **Shadow Hills/La Tuna Canyon/Sun Valley (33,000+ households; 80,000+ people; 2,500+ horses)**



- **Significant, Unavoidable Construction Impacts from E2 and E3**
 - Creates a myriad of environmental impacts to our National Monument and National Forest.
 - Scars, savages and permanently defaces the “hills” which gave **Shadow Hills** its name and character by tunneling right into the most visible and public “face” of the community, thus, earning the moniker “Shadow Holes.”
 - Visible to hundreds of thousands of residents and 210 Freeway travelers daily.
 - Tunnel construction beneath these communities, or operation of the rail line above grade, and resulting truck traffic, creates noise, fuel emissions, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts for residents, motorists, schools (e.g. Vinedale Elementary School and Stonehurst Elementary School), churches (e.g. All Nations Church, Mountain View Baptist Church, Sun Valley Community Church), horses and wildlife.
 - Dust would be unhealthy for residents, horses and wildlife (e.g. several cases of Valley Fever resulted in the deaths of animals locally during home construction very near routes E2 and E3).
 - Eminent domain would threaten both historic homes and seniors in the community.
 - Inadequate bridges and winding, country road infrastructure would not support the hundreds of daily truck trips required for dirt excavation and delivery of construction materials, especially if inert landfills in Sun Valley are used to landfill the excavated dirt. Road widening is not desired and would change the area’s rural character.
 - Air quality impacts from construction-related dust and truck emissions would be unprecedented.
 - Road closures would disrupt residential and business thoroughfare as well as the critical equestrian crossings and trail activity along Wentworth Street in Shadow Hills that link up to trail systems in the Big Tujunga Wash and Hansen Dam Recreation Area.

- Burbank will be severely impacted by the at-grade portion of E1 and the tunnels resulting from E2 and E3.
- *Significant, Unavoidable Operations Impacts from E2 and E3*
 - Creates a myriad of environmental impacts to our National Monument and National Forest.
 - Creates perpetual noise, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts at each of the tunnel openings along Wentworth Street in Shadow Hills, and from across the Big Tujunga Wash all the way to Lake View Terrace. Since we live with Freeway noise already, which emanates from the same location, we know the sound of the high speed train cannot be mitigated.
 - The hills, mountains, flood plain and canyons are a natural conduit for sound, acting at times like an echo chamber or natural amphitheater.
 - Creates surface noise and sub-sonic vibration affecting humans, horses and wildlife throughout residential areas, ranches and stables located above active tunnels.
 - Burbank will be severely impacted by the at-grade portion of E1 and the tunnels resulting from E2 and E3.
 - Creates a new threat of terrorism and tunnel disasters for residents and equestrians.

2. Lake View Terrace (4,500 households; 12,000+ residents; 2,000+ horses)

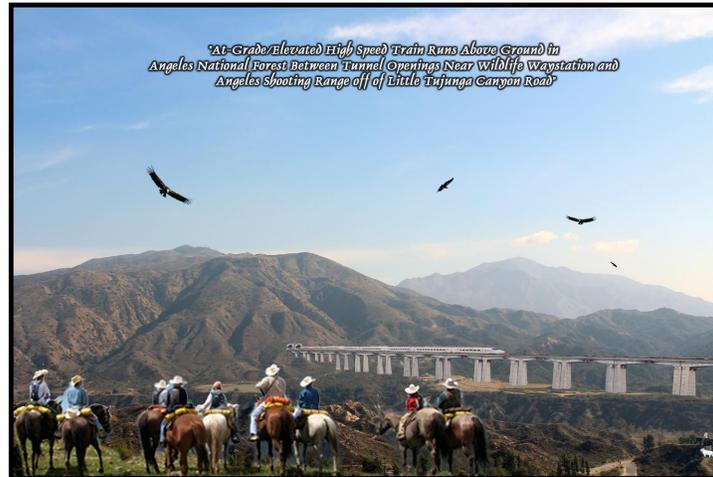


- *Significant, Unavoidable Construction Impacts from E2 and E3*
 - Creates a myriad of environmental impacts to our National Monument and National Forest.
 - Decimates the grand view and presence of the south-facing San Gabriel Mountains in the heart of **Lake View Terrace** by tunneling right into the most visible and public “face” of the community, thus, earning the moniker “Lake View Tunnels.”
 - Construction of the tunnels beneath Lake View Terrace, and resulting truck traffic, creates noise, fuel emissions, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts for residents, horses and wildlife.
 - Visible to hundreds of thousands of residents and 210 Freeway travelers daily.
 - Dust would be unhealthful for residents, horses and wildlife.
 - Eminent domain would threaten both historic homes and seniors in the community.
 - Inadequate road and bridge infrastructure would not support the hundreds of daily truck trips required for dirt excavation and delivery of construction materials. Road widening is not desired and would change the area’s rural character.
 - If inert landfills in Sun Valley are used to landfill the excavated dirt, this would create additional truck traffic through Shadow Hills which is adjacent to Sun Valley.
 - Air quality impacts from construction-related dust and truck emissions would be unprecedented.
 - Road closures would disrupt residential and business thoroughfare as well as the critical equestrian crossings along Foothill Boulevard that link up to trail systems in the Big Tujunga Wash.

- *Significant, Unavoidable Operations Impacts from E2 and E3*
 - Creates a myriad of environmental impacts to our National Monument and National Forest.
 - Creates perpetual noise and vibration at each of the tunnel openings along Foothill Boulevard, and from across the Big Tujunga Wash all the way to Shadow Hills. Since we live with Freeway noise already, which emanates from the same location, we know the sound of the high speed train cannot be mitigated.
 - The hills, mountains, canyons and flood plain are a natural conduit for sound, acting at times like an echo chamber or natural amphitheater.
 - Creates surface noise and sub-sonic vibration affecting humans, horses and wildlife throughout residential areas, ranches and stables located above active tunnels.
 - Creates new threat of terrorism and tunnel disasters for residents and equestrians.

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3. Kagel Canyon (300+ households; 1,000+ residents; 750+ horses)



- *Significant, Unavoidable Construction Impacts from E1*
 - Creates a myriad of environmental impacts to our National Monument and National Forest.
 - Construction of the at-grade portion of E1 creates noise, vibration and dust impacts for residents, horses and wildlife.
 - Construction of the tunnel openings near both the Angeles Shooting Range (to the south) and the Wildlife Waystation (to the north), and resulting truck traffic, would create noise, fuel emissions, vibration, visual/aesthetic, dust and safety impacts for residents, horses and wildlife, as well as disrupt equestrian trail uses and other recreational uses.
 - Since **Kagel Canyon** residents live with gunshot noise already, which emanates from the same shooting range location as the proposed tunnel opening, we know the sound of the high speed train cannot be mitigated.
 - Disrupts/destroys the Upper Marek Equestrian Trail system, the predominant loop connecting Kagel Canyon, Little Tujunga Canyon and Lake View Terrace. The trail system is utilized by more than 1,000 horses and riders in the immediate vicinity.
 - Construction of the tunnels beneath Kagel Canyon creates noise, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts for residents, horses and wildlife.
 - Dust would be unhealthy for residents, horses and wildlife.
 - Tunneling under Kagel Canyon would threaten water wells, potentially draining the underground aquifer which provides water to Kagel Canyon residents and the greater Angeles National Forest region as well.
 - Tunneling under Kagel Canyon could damage septic systems, potentially causing groundwater pollution.
 - Existing roads such as Little Tujunga Canyon Road are not equipped to handle the hundreds of dirt truck trips daily and residents strongly oppose upgrading the roads for construction purposes as that would change the rural character and use of the roads.

- If inert landfills in nearby Sun Valley are used to landfill the excavated dirt, this would create additional truck traffic through Lake View Terrace and Shadow Hills en route to Sun Valley.
- Creates a wide variety of negative impacts during both construction and operations phases to the Sun Valley community at the tunnel opening near Montague Street in Sun Valley, and at-grade operations along San Fernando Road.
- Burbank will be severely impacted by the at-grade portion of E1 and the tunnels resulting from E2 and E3.
- Proposed tunneling near or under the Lopez Canyon landfill facility, already a major nuisance to the Kagel Canyon community, puts methane and leachate collection systems at risk and creates the potential for water contamination and hazardous waste discharge.
- *Significant, Unavoidable Operations Impacts from E1*
 - Creates a myriad of environmental impacts to our National Monument and National Forest.
 - Creates perpetual noise and vibration along the approximate 2-mile, at-grade distance from Wildlife Waystation to the Angeles Shooting Range.
 - Creates perpetual noise and vibration at each of the tunnel openings along Little Tujunga Canyon Road.
 - The hills, mountains and canyons are a natural conduit for sound, acting at times like an echo chamber or natural amphitheater.
 - Creates noise and sub-sonic vibration affecting humans, horse and wildlife throughout residential areas located above the active tunnels.
 - Disrupts/destroys the Upper Marek Equestrian Trail system, the predominant loop connecting Kagel Canyon, Little Tujunga Canyon and Lake View Terrace. The trail system is utilized by more than 1,000 horses and riders in the immediate vicinity.
 - Creates a wide variety of negative impacts during both construction and operations phases to the Sun Valley community at the tunnel opening near Montague Street in Sun Valley, and at-grade operations along San Fernando Road.
 - Burbank will be severely impacted by the at-grade portion of E1 and the tunnels resulting from E2 and E3.
 - Creates new threat of terrorism and tunnel disasters for residents, equestrians and U.S. Forest Service.

4. Big Tujunga Wash/Hansen Dam Recreation Area/Scenic Preservation Plan/Rim of the Valley Corridor



- *Significant, Unavoidable Construction Impacts from E2 and E3*
 - Permanently defaces and changes the character of one of the most pristine, expansive and beautiful panoramic views and open space remaining in Los Angeles County.
 - Installation of bridges and pylons puts water supply (federal) and indigenous fish and wildlife at risk. The Big Tujunga Wash is volatile during storm events, as well.
 - Visible to hundreds of thousands of residents and 210 Freeway travelers daily.
 - Bridge construction, and resulting truck traffic, creates noise, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts for residents, motorists, horses and wildlife.
 - Dust would be unhealthy for residents, horses and wildlife.
 - Inadequate bridges and nearby residential streets would not support the hundreds of daily truck trips required for dirt excavation and delivery of construction materials, especially if inert landfills in neighboring Sun Valley are used to landfill the excavated dirt. Road widening is not desired and would change the area's rural character.
 - Air quality impacts from construction-related dust and truck emissions would be unprecedented.
 - Construction activity would disrupt critical equestrian crossings and trail activity throughout the entire Big Tujunga Wash and Hansen Dam Recreation areas.
 - Creates surface noise and sub-sonic vibration affecting humans, horses and wildlife throughout the Big Tujunga Wash and Hansen Dam Recreation areas, as well as neighboring/adjacent residential areas, ranches and stables.

- *Significant, Unavoidable Operations Impacts from E2 and E3*
 - Ongoing high speed rail operations puts water supply (federal) and indigenous fish and wildlife at permanent risk. The Big Tujunga Wash is volatile during storm events, as well.
 - Perpetual noise, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts and hazards are created for horses and riders. Existence of electrical impulses and sub-sonic sound impacts horses, wildlife and fish.
 - Permanently defaces and changes the character and visual/aesthetics of one of the most pristine, expansive and beautiful panoramic views and open space remaining in Los Angeles County. This view is enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of nearby residents, equestrians and other users of the open space and motorists on a daily basis.
 - Permanently destroys the “equestrian and trails experience” shared by our Foothill communities and residents/equestrians by tunneling into, out and over Shadow Hills, Lake View Terrace and the San Gabriel Mountains in clear view of our panoramic, expansive open-space recreation area and viewshed.
 - Creates a new threat of terrorism and bridge disasters for residents, equestrians and other users of Big Tujunga Wash and Hansen Dam Recreation area.
 - Per the San Gabriel/Verdugo Mountains Scenic Preservation Specific Plan adopted by the City of Los Angeles in 2004, this area has been designated a scenic byway, and HSR must adhere to its requirements.
 - Could impact the National Park Service Rim of the Valley Corridor plans to provide campgrounds and picnic areas in the mountains and a nature center facility for Hansen Dam.
 - Disrupts and may bisect Rim of the Valley trails that will encircle the “north, east and west edges of the San Fernando/La Crescenta Valley to facilitate the development of an interlocking, connected system of public parks, trails and wildlife habitat preserves within the mountain areas.”
 - Disrupts the Rim of the Valley intention that “Foothills along the urban edge and ridges and peaks visible from the Valley should be preserved to enhance both the scenic and wildlife values of the Corridor.”

5. San Gabriel Mountains National Monument and Angeles National Forest



- *Significant, Unavoidable Construction and Operations Impacts from E1, E2 and E3*
 - Disrupts equestrian, motorcycle, cyclist, camping and hiking pursuits in the National Monument and National Forest. The newly designated National Monument is within one hour's drive of over 17 million people living in Southern California. The Angeles National Forest provides more than 70% of LA County's Open Space. Each year, more than 3 million people visit the Angeles National Forest to hike, fish, ride horses, camp, ski, picnic and just enjoy the remarkable beauty of the San Gabriel Mountains. These National Forest lands are some of the most heavily visited public lands in the country; this area is vital to the greater metropolitan Los Angeles and Southern California region.
 - Impacts wildlife, natural springs and running streams throughout the National Monument and National Forest. The San Gabriel Mountains offer critical habitat and biological corridors for Nelson's bighorn sheep, California condors, mountain lions, spotted owls and many other endangered, threatened and sensitive species.
 - The San Gabriel Mountains provide Los Angeles with 30% of its drinking water and it would be irresponsible with the current, epic drought conditions to consider damaging this essential water supply by constructing and tunneling high speed rail in its proximity.
 - Creates perpetual noise, vibration, visual/aesthetic and safety impacts throughout the length of construction activity in the National Monument and National Forest, as well as the adjacent Wilderness Area, especially along the approximate 2-mile distance from Wildlife Waystation to the Angeles Shooting Range.
 - The hills, mountains, flood plain and canyons are a natural conduit for sound, acting at times like an echo chamber or natural amphitheater.

CONCLUSION: EAST CORRIDOR ALTERNATIVES ARE CLEARLY INFEASIBLE

1. HSR Creates Significant, Unavoidable Environmental Impacts and Damage

The most damaging impacts in the East Corridor region during construction and operations, such as visual blight, perpetual surface noise, sub-sonic noise, vibration and more than a million truck trips to remove excavated dirt are so obvious and render the East Corridor alternatives so infeasible, we maintain these alternatives should never have seen the light of day. We reject HSR's claim that the Corridor alternatives are merely conceptual or preliminary – they are VERY REAL to us! That is why we hold that HSR, as a public entity, must be responsible for the damage it is inflicting on targeted/identified communities. The communities/areas negatively impacted by the East Corridor alternatives include: San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, Angeles National Forest, Kagel Canyon, Lake View Terrace, Sunland/Tujunga, Shadow Hills, La Tuna Canyon, Sun Valley, Pacoima and Burbank.

2. HSR Faces Strict, Protective, Time-Consuming, Expensive and Potentially Unobtainable Permitting Processes

The processes for accessing Federal lands and waters such as the National Monument, National Forest and Big Tujunga Wash, as well as dealing with a Superfund site near Burbank Airport, increase the infeasibility of the East Corridor alternatives by adding years and tens of millions of dollars to the timing and cost of HSR, with no certainty that the judgments or permit applications would be positive for HSR from entities such as the U.S. Forest Service, Army Corps of Engineers, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, etc. Adverse rulings by these agencies could also have a very damaging effect on HSR's EIR/EIS, requiring either additional work or recirculation, as well as adding to the likelihood of CEQA/NEPA challenges.

3. The East Corridor Alternatives are the Most Expensive

Every engineer we have consulted within our community and through our professional contacts, every research document we have reviewed, AND every HSR staff person or engineering consultant we have spoken to acknowledges that the East Corridor alternatives, due to their reliance on tunneling and jurisdiction in part by Federal agencies, are far more expensive than either elevated or at-grade routes, and far more expensive than the SR 14 alternatives.

One of our "learned" concepts, unfortunately, is that HSR cannot "tunnel" its way out of the challenges of approaching densely populated regions with a 220 mph high speed train, with dual tracks and dual tunnels. Because some at-grade or elevated rail lines will be needed, HSR faces brutal, no-win trade-offs and potential fatal flaws at many junctures along the route from Palmdale to Burbank.

4. Legal Challenges Await HSR

Residents and businesses throughout the East Corridor are already exploring a variety of legal remedies related to issues such as:

- a. Definition of “Existing” Transportation and Utility Corridor, per the enabling legislation
- b. Interpretation of HSR’s locating East Corridor alternatives in a “Utility Corridor”
- c. Violation of National Monument and National Forest guidelines
- d. Failure to adhere to CEQA/NEPA processes and procedures
- e. Decline of Property Values and other Financial Damages to Property and Business Owners

To conclude, because the E1, E2 and E3 alternatives violate the newly created National Monument, they must be eliminated. Because the alternatives are proposed to be constructed and operated within a National Forest, and very near a protected Wilderness area, they must be eliminated. Because the alternatives are already damaging and would ultimately destroy the character of the Foothill communities, especially Shadow Hills, Lake View Terrace and Kagel Canyon, they must be eliminated. Because the proposed alternatives require study and operation in Federal lands and outside of an existing transportation corridor, as required by the legislation (the alignment near existing utility corridors is a flimsy, far-fetched interpretation of what an “existing transportation and utility corridor” is), they must be eliminated.

From an engineering standpoint, we demand the East Corridor alternatives be eliminated from further consideration and/or inclusion in the upcoming EIR/EIS. In addition, we recommend strongly that the SR 14 alternatives, particularly where they travel along San Fernando Road, are seriously flawed, infeasible and need major improvements. From a communications standpoint, we call for HSR to change its way of working with communities to one of partnership and collaboration, rather than one of embargoed information and force-fed alternatives developed by engineers lacking local sensitivity combined with local community input.

Our communities deserve to be freed from further entanglement in HSR’s flawed approach to densely populated communities. We have suffered enough. We want our peace of mind, quality of life, lifestyle and financial integrity restored. *We are determined to preserve the horse as our preferred high speed mode of transportation.*

To do that, we are prepared to wage an ongoing battle in our communities, politically and in the press. We are prepared to do whatever it takes, including taking legal action, to remove this threat prior to commencement of the project EIR/EIS and to be remedied for the damages incurred. We are communicating vigorously with all of our elected officials, as well as relevant government agencies to ensure there is widespread knowledge of this issue and of our demand for elimination of the East Corridor alternatives from further consideration. We are in close consultation with legal counsel and continue to monitor every move HSR makes in our area. Already, residents and businesses have pledged significant funds to our legal defense fund. We demand your prompt action.

Sincerely,

The S.A.F.E. Coalition – “Don’t Railroad Our Communities”

David J. DePinto William E. Eick

Dave DePinto and Bill Eick; President and Board Member
On Behalf of the Shadow Hills Property Owners Association

Fritz Bronner Vikki Brink

Fritz Bronner and Vikki Brink; Lake View Terrace Residents; ETI Members; Horse Boarding Facility Owners
Members, Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council

William K. Slocum Kelly E. Decker Katharine E. Paull

William Slocum, Kelly Decker and Katharine Paull; President, Vice President and Corresponding Secretary
On Behalf of Kagel Canyon Civic Association

Nancy Woodruff

Nancy Woodruff; Vice President, La Tuna Canyon Community Association
Vice President, Foothill Trails District Neighborhood Council

Mark Seigel Cindy Cleghorn

Mark Seigel and Cindy Cleghorn; Sunland/Tujunga Residents and Business Owner
President and Vice President, Sunland/Tujunga Neighborhood Council

Brad Bleichner Alan Gettelman

Brad Bleichner and Alan Gettelman
On Behalf of Rancho Verdugo Estates Homeowners Association