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Assembly California Legislature

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JIM PATTERSON
ASSEMBLYMAN, TWENTY-THIRD DISTRICT

July 22, 2019

Mr. David S. Kim
Secretary
California State Transportation Agency
915 Capitol Mall, Suite 350B
Sacramento, CA 95814

Mr. Brian Kelly
Chief Executive Officer
California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Removal of Documents from HSRA Website

Dear Mr. Kim and Mr. Kelly:

In Governor Newsom's February 2019 State of the State address he called for greater transparency for California's high speed rail project. His promise to Legislators and to the people of California was to, "hold contractors and consultants accountable to explain how taxpayer dollars are spent – including change orders, cost overruns, even travel expenses," going a step further promising that "It's going online, for everybody to see."

His efforts to champion greater transparency within the High Speed Rail Authority are commendable and I hope you share them.

It is with that in mind that I insist you immediately return all business plans, long form change orders and archived HSRA Board materials and supporting documents that were removed from the High Speed Rail Authority website on or about June 28. The Authority claims to have replaced dozens of change orders with ADA compliant spreadsheets but has no intention of returning these important documents in long form to the website. Instead, those wanting to view these previously posted documents must file a public records request with your agency.

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The Authority's removal of all business plans prior to 2016 and all change orders does little to engender the trust and transparency you claim to be interested in. In fact this act cripples legislators, journalists, concerned citizens and government watchdog groups from shining the bright light of accountability on this ever changing project. It also limits their ability to research the project in-depth without first filing a public records request.

Making a public records request for documents that were previously available to the public in the name of following ADA guidelines smacks of an attempt to shield your agency from the scrutiny it deserves.

I look forward to your response with the date these documents will be added back on the Authority's website in their entirety.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jim Patterson", written over a horizontal line.

Jim Patterson

Assemblymember, 23rd District
Vice Chair, Accountability and Administrative Review
Member, Assembly Budget Sub Committee Sub 3 Resources and Transportation
Member, Assembly Budget Committee