



SAVE ANGELES FOREST FOR EVERYONE

PO Box 345, Sunland, CA 91041-0345 board.safe.coalition@gmail.com

March 10, 2021

Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: California High-Speed Rail Project

Dear Secretary Buttigieg:

Congratulations on your appointment to President Biden's Cabinet as the Secretary of Transportation! Your executive experience as a mayor and your extensive cost:benefit analytical experience lends itself perfectly to addressing the challenges of transportation while at the same time combatting climate change—the most critical issue facing us today. We can agree that green projects MUST be implemented as soon as possible in order to slow, stop, or reverse the impacts of greenhouse gas.

Your appearance on MSNBC's "The Reid Out" on February 4, 2021, prompted this letter as you mentioned high-speed rail (HSR) as part of the overall transportation menu as one of the steps to reduce greenhouse gasses and to improve mobility. Additionally, a graphic from Ms. Walker of the *New York Times* was presented during Ms. Reid's program which listed transportation project suggestions for you to consider right away. Among them was "Fund California's High-Speed Rail." While Ms. Walker's suggestions looked attractive, we strongly believe Californians possess superior knowledge of our high-speed rail project. The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA or "the Authority") wants you to believe it's providing tens of thousands of jobs (due to that popular yet misleading "jobs years" notion), is a clean/green project, and is well managed. It is none of these things and frankly, is irredeemable at this point in time. You know that old saying to stop throwing good money after bad? This project is a prime example. We believe that after reading this letter, you will agree that this project does not deserve any additional federal funding for the following reasons:

1. Climate change needs to be addressed NOW and California's high-speed rail is NOT the answer, as any net positive effects will not be realized until at least 2060, if ever;
2. Construction and operation have already had and will continue to have negative, unmitigable impacts on the environment and local communities;
3. The project has suffered from continued mismanagement, as confirmed by the California State Auditor, who entitled her audit report: "*California High-Speed Rail Authority: Its Flawed Decision Making and Poor Contract Management Have Contributed to Billions in Cost Overruns and Delays in the System's Construction.*" The project budget has already skyrocketed from \$16 billion to \$99.9 billion, with no end in sight.

Brief Overview of the Project. The California High-Speed Rail Authority was formed in September 1996. However, it did not gain any traction until 2008, when California voters narrowly approved Proposition 1A allowing the state to issue \$9.95 billion in bonds to the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

What we voted for:

- A 220-mph high-speed train
- With a 520-mile route connecting San Francisco to Los Angeles
- With a budget of \$45 billion

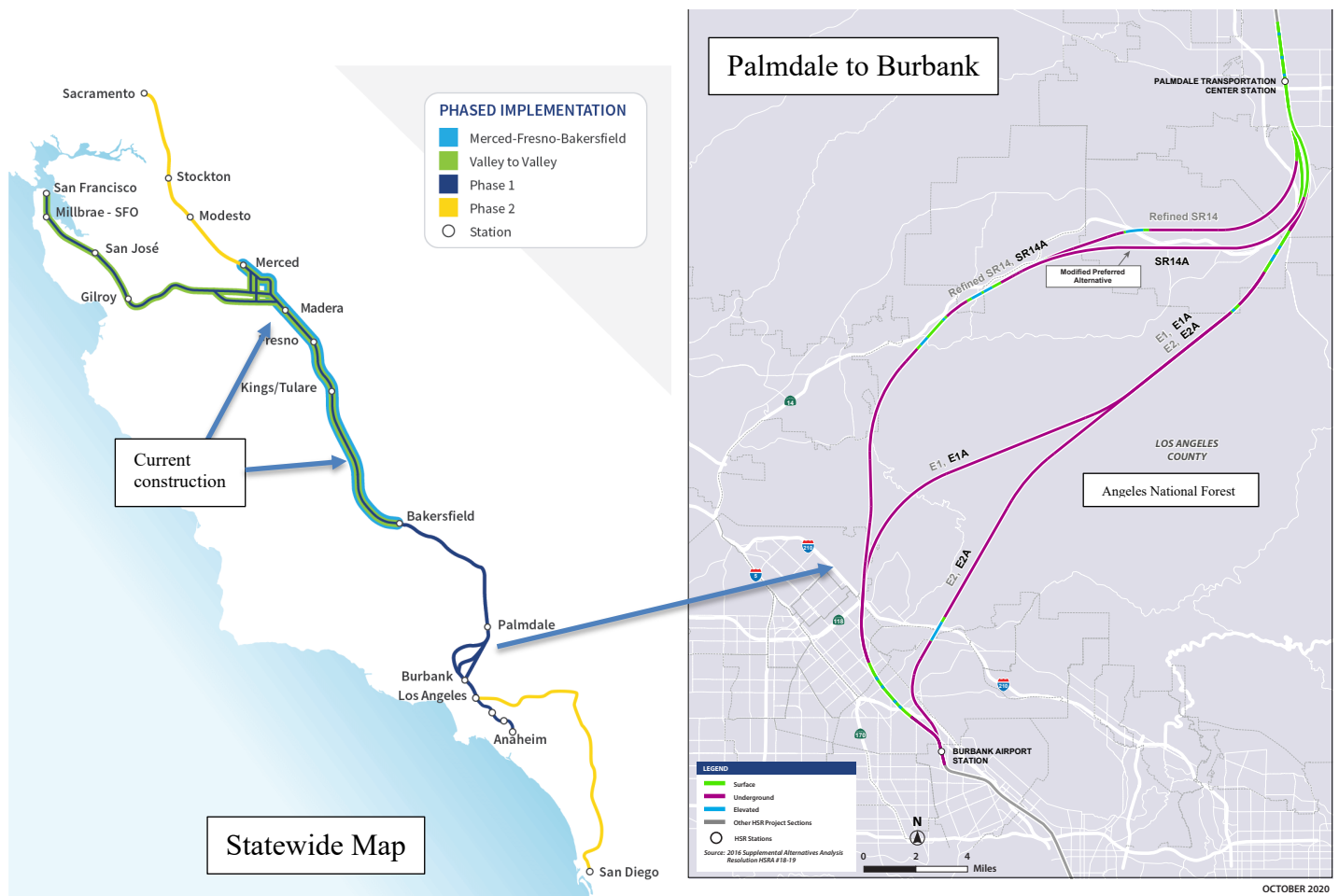
- With the requirement that \$9 billion of the \$9.95 billion bonds be matched by public and private funds.

What we got (13 years later):

- A “not high-speed” train that will have to share miles of blended tracks at speeds ranging from 40 mph to 80 mph
- With a scaled-back initial operating segment of 171 miles connecting Merced to Bakersfield
- With a budget of \$99.9 billion
- With NO private funds secured, plus an \$80-billion funding gap that needs to be filled to actually build out the full line

From 2014 to present, scathing audit reports have been issued, scandals have rocked the project (including a defective bridge which had to be demolished shortly after construction), massive budget overruns, high management turnover, a state legislature demanding accountability, and purchase and/or seizure of generational family-owned properties (including farms, orchards, and ranches) which later were deemed not to be needed after all—many of which were not paid fair market value for their property.

About Us. “Save Angeles Forest for Everyone” (“S.A.F.E.”) is a grass-roots, non-partisan group of community volunteers who organized in Fall 2014 to stop the California High-Speed Rail Authority from building train routes that cause irreparable environmental damage to the Angeles National Forest, the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument, and our local communities of Kagel Canyon, Sunland-Tujunga, Shadow Hills, Lakeview Terrace, La Tuna Canyon, and Sun Valley. Over the last six years, we have become “accidental” high-speed train experts, particularly with respect to the Palmdale-to-Burbank project section. The majority of our coalition is comprised of Democrats.



1. Climate Change Needs to be Addressed NOW and California's High-Speed Rail is NOT the Answer, as Any Net Positive Effects Will not be Realized Until at Least 2060, if Ever

At best, the high-speed train cannot even begin to reduce greenhouse gas emissions until 2060 (see below) and as such, should not be considered a priority “green” project. CHSRA just released its Revised Draft 2020 Business Plan which projects that a 119-mile segment “may” be operational by 2030. They started planning this project in 2008 after the Proposition 1A \$9.95 billion bond issue was narrowly approved by voters, which means that it will have taken 22 years (and that’s assuming they don’t miss this deadline, as they have every single deadline to-date) for a relatively “easy” 119-mile segment from tree orchards in Bakersfield to a city of 525,000 (Fresno) to become operational. Then, it will take another 30 years (see below re: Legislative Analyst’s Office assessment) to recoup the greenhouse gasses emitted during construction (bulldozers, backhoes, dump trucks¹, drilling equipment, concrete trucks/mixers, etc.) That pushes any positive impact well past 2060 (2030 plus 30 years of greenhouse gas recoupment)—and again, that is only *for 119 of the 520 miles (23%) of the project’s total route*. The earliest the Bakersfield to Los Angeles segment would be operational is 2043 (plus 30 years for greenhouse gas recoupment = 2073). There is no reliable estimate as to when (or if) the entire 520-mile Phase 1 will be operational.

As noted, the project will emit more greenhouse gasses than it saves for the first 30 years of operation. Potential recoupment also depends on ridership and how many cars and airline trips are actually eliminated due to passengers who opt to take the train. For example, if an airline is still flying the same number of flights along the Los Angeles-San Francisco corridor after the train is operational, then there is NO greenhouse gas reduction. The same is true for vehicle travel but even to a lesser extent due to the cost of travel. CHSRA forecasts that tickets will cost about 85% of airline tickets but it will take over 3:30 hours to get from Los Angeles to San Francisco (one of the selling points was that it will take only 2:40 hours). However, the train will stop at 8 stations along the route, adding about an hour of time. To take the train from Burbank to San Francisco, it would cost a family of four \$800 (round trip). They would also likely have to rent a car at their destination at a minimum cost of \$30 per day. If the family drove, it would cost them \$118 round trip (traditional gasoline vehicle) or \$50 for a hybrid, or \$29 for an electric vehicle. Because they drove, they would already have a vehicle at their destination. For business travelers who are traveling for a same day meeting, they will still opt for air travel as it’s only a 1-hour flight each way. The issues are: Who are the people who will be using the high-speed train? Are there enough of them to eliminate an airline flight(s) or trip(s) by gasoline vehicle? If not, then high-speed trains will not reduce greenhouse gas emissions as an alternative form of travel but instead will merely become an additional mode of travel.

Further, the non-partisan California Legislative Analyst’s Office states: *“High-Speed Rail Would Initially Increase GHG² Emissions for Many Years*. As mentioned above, in order to be a valid use of cap-and-trade revenues, programs will need to reduce GHG emissions. While the HSRA has not conducted an analysis to determine the impact that the high-speed rail system will have on GHG emissions in the state, an independent study found that—*if the high-speed rail system met its ridership targets and renewable electricity commitments—construction and operation of the system would emit more GHG emissions than it would reduce for approximately the first 30 years*. While high-speed rail could reduce GHG emissions in the very long run, given the previously mentioned legal constraints, the fact that it would initially be a net emitter of GHG emissions could raise legal risks.”³ [emphasis added]

The Reason Foundation’s findings are even more dire: “In a 2010 UC Berkeley study, Professors Mikhail Chester and Arpad Horvath estimated that the entire California high-speed rail project would generate 9.7 million metric tons of carbon

¹ It is estimated that it will take 1.5 million 12-cubic yard fossil-fueled truck trips (round trip) to remove the 9.5 million cubic yards of excavated material from just the Palmdale to Burbank route alone. While it’s possible that electric conveyors may be utilized for part of the excavation process, that determination has not been made.

² Greenhouse Gas (GHG)

³ <http://www.lao.ca.gov/analysis/2012/transportation/high-speed-rail-041712.pdf>. “Legal risks” refers to the fact that the California “cap & trade” program requires that beneficiaries of the generated revenue be “green.” The high-speed train currently is a beneficiary of 25% of these funds so if it’s legally challenged as to its standing, it is at risk for losing such funding from this revenue stream.

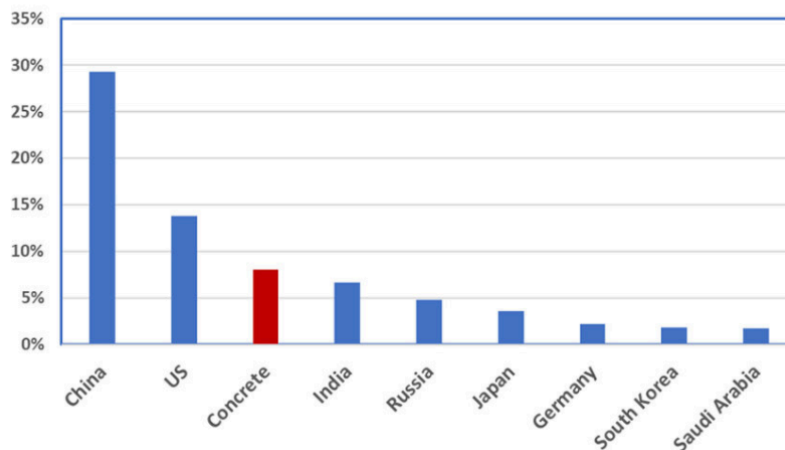
dioxide during construction. Chester and Horvath estimated that it would take high-speed rail *71 years of operation at medium occupancy to offset its own construction-related greenhouse-gas emissions*. Given the project's delays and carbon reductions being achieved by new technology, like electric vehicles, it is possible that, if built, the rail system will never pay back the carbon investment required to build it."⁴ [emphasis added]

CHSRA's estimates regarding the rate and amount of GHG recoupment are misleading because its recoupment calculations begin at the point in time at which the train becomes operational – in other words, they intentionally exclude the construction phase of the project. CHSRA conceals the massive amount of GHG emissions created by and during the construction of this project – the largest infrastructure project in the State's history. The high-speed train will not just be plopped on tracks on top of ballast. The project includes miles of viaducts (both for the train and rerouting vehicular traffic), deep-bored tunnels, cut and cover tunnels, and trenches—not to mention platforms and stations. The train infrastructure relies on millions of tons of concrete, which in and by itself, is a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. To connect the proposed stations at Palmdale and Burbank, CHSRA intends to construct approximately 20+ miles of deep-bored twin tunnels through the San Gabriel Mountains. That means that for just one project section (representing just 7% of the total project distance), CHSRA will build 40+ miles of tunnel, requiring over one million tons of concrete, the manufacture of which will emit over one million tons of CO².

If concrete were a country, it would be the third largest greenhouse gas emitter⁵:

Global Warming Has Concrete Problem When It Comes to CO2

October 04, 2019



2. Construction and Operation Have Already Had and Will Continue to Have Negative, Unmitigable Impacts on the Environment and Local Communities

Dewatering, Noise, and Infrastructure in an Environmentally Sensitive Area. The Angeles National Forest (ANF) and the San Gabriel Mountains National Monument are vital to the greater metropolitan Los Angeles region. These specially designated areas are within one hour's drive of over 17 million people living in Southern California. Each year, more than 3 million people visit the National Forest to hike, fish, ride horses, camp, ski, picnic, and just enjoy the remarkable beauty of the San Gabriel Mountains. As such, these lands are some of the most heavily visited public lands in the country. These areas were designated for the purpose of being protected from manmade encroachments and deserve to be defended against the guaranteed devastation that construction and operation of the high-speed train will cause.

- **Wildlife:** The area of the ANF through which the train is proposed to be constructed is home to dozens of endangered and threatened species, including the mountain lion and the California condor, which has been brought back from the brink of extinction. Wildlife will be jeopardized through loss of habitat, impeded migration patterns, excessive noise,

⁴ <https://reason.org/commentary/california-overstates-bullet-trains-climate-benefits/>

⁵ <https://www.econ.org/climate-change/2019/10/4/global-warming-has-a-co2concrete-problem>

and threat of electrocution or collision with the train. A nearly 1-mile bridge crossing the Big Tujunga Wash and Haines Canyon Creek jeopardizes several endangered species, including the Santa Ana Suckerfish which occupies only two habitats—one in San Bernardino and one in the Big Tujunga Wash.

- **Water:** Tunneling jeopardizes critical groundwater sources in the mountains that provide Los Angeles with about 15% of its precious local water. The project's proposed tunneling could easily and permanently dewater these aquifers, causing irreparable harm to our wildlife and Los Angeles' scarce water supply. Note that the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority completely dewatered Runyon Canyon while tunneling the Metro Red Line.

Tunneling is Not "Invisible." Proponents of the project insist that the train tunnels "under," not "through," the ANF, suggesting that there are no impacts on the forest floor. This is simply not the case.

- Construction staging areas covering multiple acres will occupy the borders of the Angeles National Forest/San Gabriel National Mountains Monument.
- 40 to 60-foot diameter tunnel portals, in addition to being an eyesore at the entrance to our protected lands, may allow animals access where they will be in harm's way.
- Every 12 miles of tunneling will require a power substation to be constructed on the forest floor in order to provide electricity for the train and its ancillary systems (ventilation, lighting, etc.).
- Emergency shafts may be required to be built to provide a means of escape onto the Forest floor.
- Additional roads will have to be constructed to accommodate emergency vehicles and maintenance equipment to access the power substations and emergency escape shafts.
- In a meeting in October 2020, CHSRA engineers admitted that once an alignment has been selected for this project section, it will need to conduct hundreds of test bores within the ANF in order to conduct its geotechnical analysis. This will necessitate hauling in multi-ton drilling machines to bore holes up to 2000 feet into the earth to conduct testing – at HUNDREDS of sites within the National Forest.

All of these are manmade encroachments and invasive infrastructure that CHSRA plans to build in the National Forest where none exist now.

There are numerous alignments that could connect a high-speed station in Palmdale to a station in Burbank. Despite years of requests, CHSRA has refused to include for consideration a single alignment that does NOT go through the Angeles National Forest. It is a counter-intuitive anomaly that a project that results in this level of destruction to a National Forest and National Monument is simultaneously represented as a "green" project.



Artist's rendering of a nearly 1-mile long concrete-intensive viaduct over the environmentally sensitive Big Tujunga Wash, home to several endangered species

Through a public records request, a draft CHSRA 2017 geotechnical report revealed a damning set of facts including: (1) for 6 of the 21 miles of tunnels through the San Gabriel Mountains, the water pressure is so high that no tunnel has ever been designed that could withstand leakage; (2) the then current \$77 billion budget excludes funding for this geotechnical challenge; and (3) if the deep-bore tunneling machine gets stuck as "Big Bertha" did in Seattle⁶, a vertical shaft of up to 2400 feet would have to be constructed to free it, or the tunnel itself would be abandoned. *The fact that CHSRA did not have this report available for public viewing and that it had to be obtained via a public records request begs the question of "What else are they hiding?"*

⁶ "Big Bertha" was a 57.5' diameter boring machine built specifically for the Washington State Department of Transportation's Alaskan Way Viaduct replacement tunnel. Work halted for 2 years after only boring 1,083 of 9,270 feet after hitting an impediment.

The Train is a Fire Hazard. The technology of “metal on metal” wheels (as opposed to maglev technology) and catenaries are susceptible to starting wildfires—something that California cannot afford. In August 2018, the Swedish Civil Protection Agency (MSB) concluded that the train companies operating Swedish railways were responsible for nearly a hundred of the forest fires that plagued their country that summer. Sparks can be emitted during braking, and stopping a train going 200 mph generates more friction than stopping one going 40 mph.



It is no secret that climate change has made California hotter and drier, and utility companies (Pacific Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison, San Diego Gas & Electric) now routinely perform public safety power shutoff (PSPS) events lasting from hours to days to millions of customers during high fire hazard conditions (mostly wind events) to prevent fires ignited by downed power lines (typically due to flying debris). High-speed rail receives its electrification through catenaries which are just as susceptible to being downed, resulting in wildfires. California simply cannot allow another ignition source for wildfires, especially through High-Fire Severity Zones such as those designated in and around the Angeles National Forest, where in the last five years hundreds of homes and businesses have been destroyed by wildfires. Wildfires know no boundaries and, if fanned by winds, may easily spread within and outside of the ANF, including to other protected lands. In February 2020, the Rim of the Valley Preservation Act was signed by Congress, adding 191,000 acres to the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. The northeastern portion of the Rim of the Valley Corridor surrounds the tunnel portals where high-speed trains are proposed to emerge on BOTH the northern and southern sides of the San Gabriel Mountains. Wildfires cause billions of dollars in property damage, injury and death to humans, pets, and wildlife. Wildlife habitat takes years to recover.

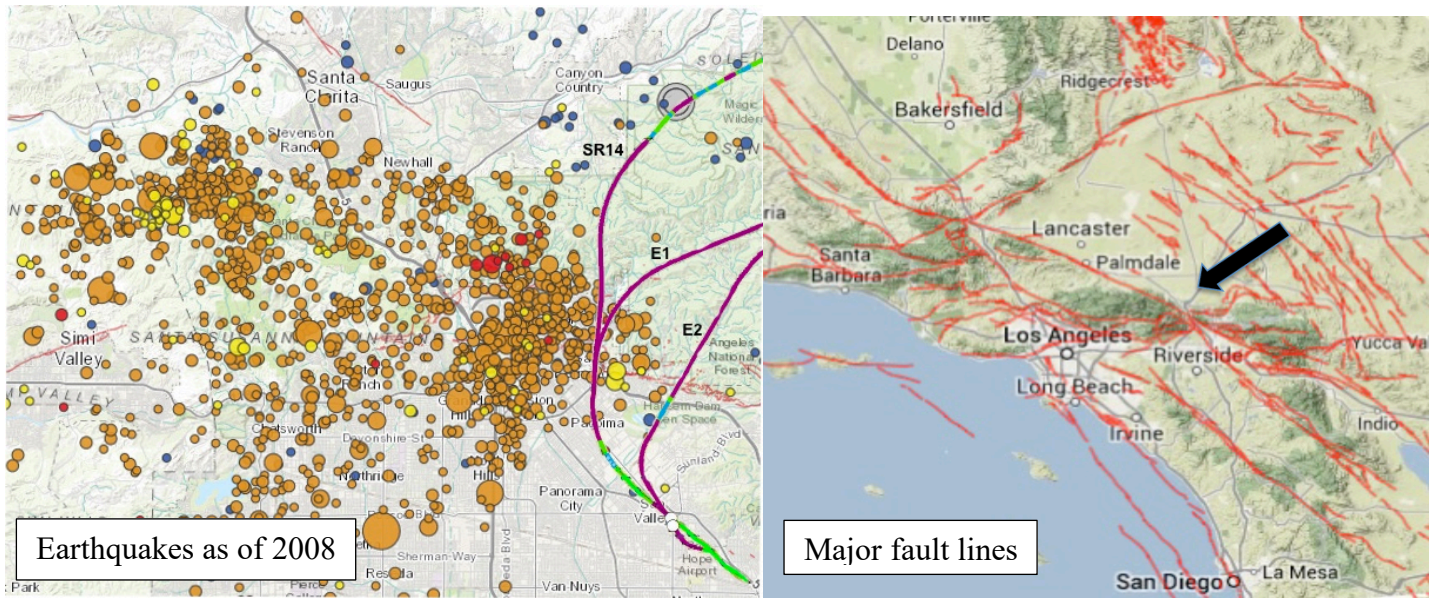


Worker repairing catenary

It is common for sparks to be generated between a catenary and the pantograph—the faster the train, the more likely sparks will occur



Active Seismic Area. The proposed train routes penetrate through numerous active faults, including the San Andreas, San Gabriel, and Sierra Madre faults. Seismic activity can directly compromise tunnel integrity and if a tunnel fails for any reason, the resulting damage can be severe. Even though the following map is from 2008, it is still useful to illustrate the numerous seismic events near the proposed routes.



One of the primary concerns of tunneling through the San Gabriel Mountains is the profusion of earthquake faults. The largest fault, the San Andreas, runs parallel to the mountain range and it has been acknowledged by the Authority that they would not tunnel under/through it, although they have no reservations of crossing it at-grade. They state that they do not have problems crossing the other numerous earthquake faults as long as the tracks are perpendicular to the faults; they will not run tracks parallel to faults. Insofar as tunneling is concerned, they state that they would allow enough lateral room in the tunnel for the tracks to shift in the event of an earthquake. Additionally, the Authority has boasted numerous times of their “earthquake safety warning system,” and their Positive Train Control (PTC) system. Yet the Authority has never detailed what measures would be taken if the earthquake system alarmed and a train was in a tunnel, e.g., would it stop? Slow down? Speed up to exit the tunnel as quickly as possible?

The relevance of the fault zones to the high-speed rail project is evidenced by the 1971 Sylmar quake (also known as the San Fernando quake). According to the LA Times, “The modern era of earthquake awareness and preparedness is deeply rooted in Sylmar,” as the Sylmar earthquake is considered, “the keystone in the long arc of seismic knowledge and the practice of earthquake safety.”⁷

In addition to killing 64 people and destroying countless private residences, the 6.6-magnitude Sylmar quake caused massive damage to major public infrastructure projects for miles around, including: the collapse of dozens of bridges and overpasses onto freeways; the collapse of four buildings at the Veterans Administration Hospital (which was eventually abandoned and demolished in totality, the devastation so insurmountable); and the near-total failure of the Lower Van Norman Dam. The mountains lurched as much as 5 feet in a matter of seconds, triggering thousands of landslides in the area and leaving a discontinuous tear where the fault ruptured the ground surface across the mountain front.

An accelerometer that was installed at the Pacoima Dam recorded a peak horizontal acceleration of 1.25 g, a value twice as large as anything ever seen from an earthquake.⁸ It simply defies logic that CHSRA plans to build its train immediately adjacent to the location where these record-high measurements were taken.

One positive outcome of the Sylmar quake was an immediate overhaul in legislation related to seismic safety. The Alquist-Priolo Geologic Hazard Zones Act, signed into law by the U.S. Senate in 1972, restricts construction across potentially-active faults, “since it is presumed that surface rupture will likely take place where past surface displacement has occurred.”⁹

⁷ <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2021-02-09/50-years-ago-1971-sylmar-earthquake-shook-la>

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1971_San_Fernando_earthquake

⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/1971_San_Fernando_earthquake

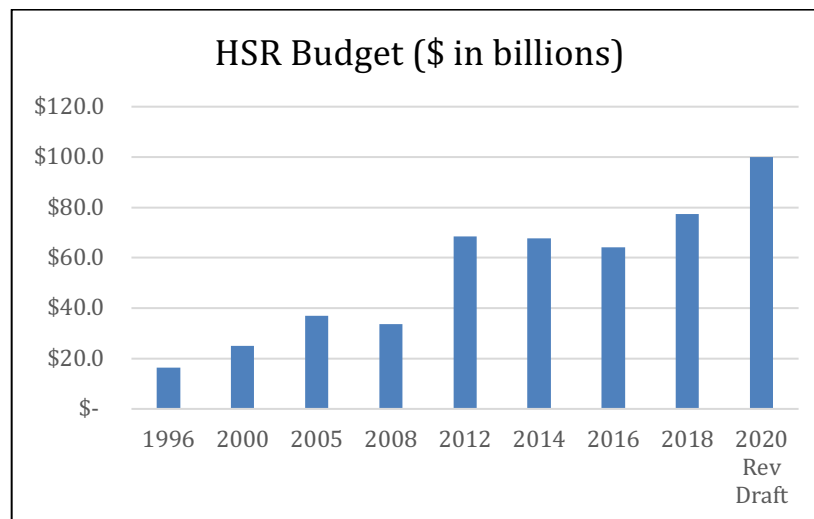
But instead of heeding these safety standards, CHSRA has designed its system such that all three proposed routes in the Burbank to Palmdale operating segment run through the San Fernando fault area and include a minimum of 21 miles of continuous tunneling. With a train traveling 200 mph, it would take over 6 minutes for a train to travel through it. Earthquakes typically last less than a minute (the infamous 1994 Northridge quake lasted 10-20 seconds) meaning that a train that is in a tunnel during an earthquake would remain in that tunnel for the duration of the quake assuming it doesn't derail or fall victim to a tunnel collapse. Also, if trains are running every 5 minutes, conceivably 2 trains could be in the same tunnel simultaneously. What if the first one derails and the second one doesn't?

The Authority's selected alignments and proposed construction methodologies exacerbate the seismic concerns because tunneling will dewater the aquifers located within the mountain, and dewatering is a destabilizing event which can trigger earthquakes.

3. The Project has Suffered from Continued Mismanagement

- Budget Skyrocketed from \$16.5 Billion to \$99.9 Billion. The 2020 budget is six times higher than the 1996 original budget.

| Business Plan Capital Costs Comparison (\$ in billions) | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------------|
| Business Plan Year | 1996 | 2000 | 2005 | 2008 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 Rev Draft |
| Estimated Cost/Budget | \$ 16.5 | \$ 25.0 | \$ 37.0 | \$ 33.6 | \$ 68.4 | \$ 67.6 | \$ 64.2 | \$ 77.3 | \$ 99.9 |
| \$ Change over Prior BP | | \$ 8.5 | \$ 12.0 | \$ -3.4 | \$ 34.8 | \$ -0.8 | \$ -3.4 | \$ 13.1 | \$ 22.6 |
| % Change over Prior BP | | 52% | 48% | -9% | 104% | -1% | -5% | 20% | 29% |
| \$ Change over Original BP | | \$ 8.5 | \$ 20.5 | \$ 17.1 | \$ 51.9 | \$ 51.1 | \$ 47.7 | \$ 60.8 | \$ 83.4 |
| % Change over Original BP | | 52% | 124% | 104% | 315% | 310% | 289% | 368% | 505% |



The cost per mile has gone from \$18.8 million to nearly \$192 million.

| Cost per Mile (millions) | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------------|
| Business Plan Year | 1996 | 2000 | 2005 | 2008 | 2012 | 2014 | 2016 | 2018 | 2020 Rev Draft |
| Miles | 880 | 700 | 520 | 520 | 520 | 520 | 520 | 520 | 520 |
| Cost per mile | \$ 18.8 | \$ 35.7 | \$ 71.2 | \$ 64.6 | \$ 131.5 | \$ 130.0 | \$ 123.5 | \$ 148.7 | \$ 191.9 |

The Authority issues a business plan every 2 years in February, followed by a public comment period. Then, if changes are made, a revised business plan is issued, *self-approved by the Authority*, and then it is presented to the California Legislature in May. However, in June 2020, the Legislature had its fill of the years of mismanagement and ever-ballooning costs of the project and refused to approve the 2020 business plan when it was put forth before them. Furthermore, the Legislature demanded that the Authority reassess its blueprint and in particular, its sketchy ridership

revenue estimates (the Prop 1A bond disallows any subsidy to the train once operational). In their 2020 Business Plan review, the California Legislative Analyst's Office predicted that \$54 million annually in operating subsidies will be required. Only 2 of the 99 current high-speed lines in the world are fiscally self-sustaining, Tokyo-Osaka and Paris-Lyon, and they required considerable subsidies at the beginning.

15 years later, \$8 billion has been expended¹⁰ and not a single inch of track has been laid.

California (and the federal government for that matter) has more important and pressing needs to spend taxpayer money on, like water storage projects, solidifying the electric grid, and fire prevention. At the current projected price tag of \$99.9 billion, the government could offer 12.4 million motorists an \$8,000 rebate towards purchasing an electric vehicle which would result in a greenhouse gas reducing impact almost *immediately*.

Scathing State Audit Report: The California State audit found egregious mishandling of the project, ranging from gross contract mismanagement to jumping the gun on construction in order to meet matching grant deadlines, resulting in millions being spent for do-overs. Here are excerpts from an article on trains.com which addresses the audit report: ¹¹

"...Then a bombshell dropped in November 2018 when the California state auditor released its report on the High-speed rail Authority. The auditor's report was scathing," Moore says. "There doesn't appear to be any aspect of the project that was well executed." The report criticized CHSRA for starting construction in the Central Valley in 2013 before it had acquired land, determined how it would relocate utilities, or obtained agreements with stakeholders. A contractor was told to begin construction within Union Pacific's right-of-way before an agreement with the freight railroad was finalized. These issues led to \$600 million in cost overruns and another \$1.6 billion in additional costs to complete construction... "The cost of operations will be high enough that a high speed train will be out-competed by airlines and automobiles." Missteps, miscommunication, and mismanagement may have brought the California High-Speed Rail project to a crisis point. According to Schweitzer, "The project boosters were so in love with the technology that they didn't really think about how to communicate the project or how to be straight with people about how costly a whole system would be, and how we really needed to find a dedicated funding source for it."

- Scathing Federal Audit Report: The federal audit issued in January 2020 found that the Authority did not meet all of its requirements but also blamed the U.S. Department of Transportation for lax oversight of the \$2.5 billion grant. The federal grant is currently being litigated based on the claim that the State did not fulfill its legal obligations.
- Meanwhile, People's Lives Have Been Destroyed. Similar to the Keystone XL Pipeline, real people's lives have been and continue to be turned upside down—not knowing if CHSRA seized their homes for anything more than a failed infrastructure experiment. In many cases, homes were seized and boarded up. The homeowners only discovered years later that their homes weren't actually even needed for the project. Watch this series of interviews with residents of the Central Valley to witness their unbelievable and heartbreaking experiences: <https://youtu.be/gbeNDDdMH0s>. A DVD is enclosed for your convenience as well. While Democrats many times understandably grab the opportunity to condemn Republicans for bad/inhumane policies, this project grossly fails Democrats' purity tests, e.g., seizing homes (many of which have been in families for decades) only to have them boarded up, and ultimately not needed.
- Contractors' Businesses are Negatively Impacted. In January 2021, Tutor-Perini-Zachry-Parsons, A Joint Venture¹², the largest high-speed rail contractor with a \$2.3 billion contract, fed up with continuous delays by CHSRA, wrote a scathing 36-page letter (enclosed) which we obtained through a public records request. Their biggest complaint is that CHSRA has failed to obtain sufficient right-of-ways in order for them to proceed, costing them and ultimately taxpayers large sums of money.

¹⁰ Total Project Expenditures with Forecasts February 2021 www.hsr.ca.gov

¹¹ Trains.com. "Missteps lead California high speed rail to crisis" by Dan Zukowski. March 4, 2019

¹² Sen. Dianne Feinstein's husband, Richard Blum, owns 75% of Tutor-Perini

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The California High-Speed Rail Authority is simply not capable of delivering a high-speed rail system in the foreseeable future. Any reduction in greenhouse gas emissions would commence around 2060 (for only a 117-mile stretch), and *only if* the train radically displaces airline and vehicle travel. We simply do not have the luxury of delaying another 40 years-- climate change must be addressed NOW. We strongly urge you and the Biden Administration to robustly pursue other "build back better" green projects that have been identified and which can be implemented much sooner: upping electric vehicle production and making them more affordable, investing in nationwide charging stations, renewable energy, and electrifying current trains (Amtrak) in congested areas (Northeast USA). These can be implemented much quicker, are jobs creators, and are much more efficient projects to reduce greenhouse gas emissions than investing in high-speed rail, especially California's high-speed rail project.

Thank you for your time and again, congratulations!

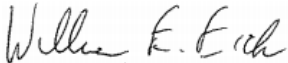
Sincerely,
On Behalf of the S.A.F.E. Coalition,



Cindy Bloom (818-445-5602)



Kelly Decker (818-761-7713)



William E. Eick, Esq. (818-497-7874)

List of Enclosures:

1. Letter from Ghassfan Ariqat, Tutor-Perini-Zachry-Parsons, to Mr. Garth Fernandez, California High-Speed Rail Authority dated January 4, 2021
2. DVD of "A Cautionary Tale," a 13-minute documentary about real people being harmed by the California High-Speed Rail Authority's mismanagement

Cc with Enclosures:

President Joseph R. Biden

Vice President Kamala D. Harris

Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer

Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell

Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi

House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy

Chairman Senator Tom Carper, Senate Environment and Public Works Committee (456 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510)

Chairman Senator Ben Cardin, Senate Subcommittee Transportation and Infrastructure

Chairman Senator Joe Manchin III, Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources (304 Dirksen Senate Building, Washington, DC 20510)

Chairwoman Senator Catherine Cortez Masto, Senate Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests, and Mining

Chairman Congressman Peter A. DeFazio, House Committee On Transportation And Infrastructure (2165 Rayburn House, Office Building, Washington, DC 20515-6256)

Chairman Congressman Donald M. Payne, House Subcommittee Railroads, Pipelines, And Hazardous Materials

Chairman Congressman Raul M. Grijalva House Natural Resource Committee on Natural Resources (1324 Longworth House, Office Building, Washington, DC 20515)

Chairman Congressman Joe Neguse, Subcommittee National Parks, Forests, and Public Lands

Chairman Congressman Frank Pallone, Jr., House Committee on Energy and Commerce (2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, DC 20515)

Chairman Congressman Paul Tonko, House Subcommittee Environment and Climate Change

Letter to Department of Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg
March 10, 2021
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Congressman Adam Schiff
California State Senator Anthony Portantino
California State Assemblywoman Luz Rivas
Los Angeles County Supervisor Kathryn Barger
Los Angeles City Councilman Paul Krekorian
Los Angeles City Council President Nury Martinez
Los Angeles City Councilwoman Monica Rodriguez