



PUBLIC NOTICE

CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT

NOTICE OF AVAILABILITY/NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

California High-Speed Rail – Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye

DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT/ ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

CEQA DOCUMENT, PROPOSED PROJECT, AND LOCATION

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) announces the availability of a draft supplemental environmental impact report pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) entitled “Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement” (referred to below as “Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS”). This document was prepared as a supplement to the 2012 Final Merced to Fresno Section Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS), which was certified/approved by the Authority as CEQA lead agency and by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) lead agency. The present Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS contains all the content required by CEQA and NEPA, however, the FRA has not signed the document for publication under NEPA. The Authority as CEQA lead agency is therefore issuing the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS pursuant to CEQA only at this time for public and agency comments under CEQA. Accordingly, content in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS that is specific or pertaining to NEPA is for information only at this time and should not be interpreted to be the opinion or conclusion of the FRA or any other federal agency. See below for more information about future potential steps under NEPA.

The 2012 Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS identified the Hybrid Alternative as the preferred alternative for the north/south alignment of the high-speed rail, but did not select a preferred alternative for the Central Valley Wye. The Authority Board of Directors certified the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS in May 2012. Although the Authority Board of Directors and FRA approved portions of the Hybrid Alternative outside the wye for the north-south alignment of the high-speed rail and the Downtown Merced and Downtown Fresno Mariposa Street station locations, these approvals deferred a decision on the area known as the “wye connection,” that is, the east-west high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east to allow for additional environmental analysis.

The Central Valley Wye portion of the Merced to Fresno Section would create the east-west connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the approved Merced to Fresno alignment. The Central Valley Wye is located in Merced and Madera counties near the City of Chowchilla with related electrical facilities extending into Fresno and Stanislaus counties.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

This Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS evaluates the impacts and benefits of implementing a wye connection in the geographically limited area between the cities of Merced and Madera and is based on additional project planning and engineering that has occurred over the last several years. This Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS evaluates four Central Valley Wye alternatives: the State Route (SR) 152 (North) to Road 13 Wye, the SR 152 (North) to Road 19 Wye, the Avenue 21 to Road 13 Wye, and the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye. These alternatives would create the high-speed rail connection between the San Jose to Merced Section to the west and the north-south Merced to Fresno Section to the east.

These Central Valley Wye alternatives were developed through extensive local and agency involvement, stakeholder meetings, and public and agency comments, and were subjected to a thorough screening process which considered the impacts of the alternatives on the social, natural, and built environment. The Authority's Proposed Project (sometimes also referred to as the Authority's "Preferred Alternative") in this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is the SR 152 (North) to Road 11 Wye Alternative.

ANTICIPATED IMPACTS

Significant pre-mitigation environmental impacts under CEQA resulting from the Central Valley Wye alternatives are anticipated in the following resource areas: air quality (construction impacts); noise and vibration (construction and project impacts); biological resources and wetlands (construction impacts); hazardous materials and wastes (construction impacts); socioeconomics and communities (construction impacts); agricultural lands (construction impacts); parks, recreation, and open space (construction impacts); aesthetics and visual resources (construction impacts); cultural resources (construction impacts); Section 4(f) (construction impacts); and environmental justice (construction and project impacts).

HAZARDOUS WASTE SITES

The Central Valley Wye alternatives would cross near sites on hazardous waste lists enumerated under Section 65962.5 of the California Government Code. These sites are: Hugh's Flying Service (14023 South Red Top Road, El Nido); PG&E's Dairyland Substation (Avenue 21 and Railroad Avenue, Chowchilla); CertainTeed Chowchilla Plant (17775 Avenue 23 1/2, Chowchilla); Minturn Huller Cooperative (9080 S. Minturn Road, Chowchilla); Kinder Morgan High-Pressure Petroleum Pipeline (UPRR/SR 99); Tony Brasil Dairy (15373 Flanagan Road, Dos Palos); Unnamed Facility (14005 Coyote Road, El Nido); Tony Machado Dairy (13611 Avenue 23 Chowchilla); Alfred Soares Dairy (21282 Road 6, Chowchilla); Rezendes Bros (11270 Avenue 21, Chowchilla); Eagle Field Airport (11100 W Eagle Ave, Firebaugh); Highway 59 Landfill (7040 North Highway 59, Merced); and General Electric Company–Kendall Site (Highway 140 and Kibby Road, Merced).

CEQA PUBLIC REVIEW PERIOD

The Authority is making this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS available for a **48-day CEQA review and comment period**.

During the 48-day CEQA comment period, written comments may be submitted in the following ways:

- Via mail to "Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS," California High-Speed Rail Authority, 770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1, Sacramento, CA 95814
- Through the Authority's website (www.hsr.ca.gov)
- Via email to CentralValley.Wye@hsr.ca.gov with the subject line "Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS Comment."

The comment period is from Friday, MAY 3, 2019, to THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019. Comments must be received electronically, or postmarked, on or before THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019.

The Authority presently is uncertain regarding future NEPA steps related to the Merced to Fresno Section: Central Valley Wye portion. The Authority will pursue collaboration with the FRA to issue a draft supplemental EIS for public comment pursuant to NEPA in the future.

Depending on the timing of issuance of a supplemental EIS and its specific content, the Authority may choose to either complete the CEQA process by issuing a Final Supplemental EIR with responses to comments received during this CEQA public review period, or alternatively it may choose to prepare a combined Final Supplemental EIR/EIS with the FRA. Under either approach, the Authority Board will review the information in the Final Supplemental EIR or EIR/EIS, including comments and responses, in considering whether to approve the project. (Note: The Authority has applied for assignment of FRA's responsibilities for NEPA and other federal environmental laws under a federal program commonly known as "NEPA assignment." If FRA approves the assignment application prior to completion of the NEPA process for the Central Valley Wye project section, then the Authority would be responsible for taking any remaining steps in the NEPA process for this project).

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSE AND CEQA PUBLIC HEARING

The Authority invites you to attend a Community Open House and CEQA Public Hearing that have been scheduled on **WEDNESDAY, MAY 15, 2019**, and **WEDNESDAY, JUNE 5, 2019**, to receive public and public agency comments under CEQA on the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. The Community Open House is scheduled from **6:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.** at the **Fairmead Elementary School Cafeteria - 19421 Avenue 22 3/4, Fairmead, CA 93610**. Authority staff will be at the open house to answer questions and receive written comments, which also may be submitted at the hearing. Interpretes al español estarán en la reunión. The CEQA public hearing is scheduled from **3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.** at the **Chowchilla-Madera Fairgrounds Little Theater - 1000 S. Third Street, Chowchilla, CA 93610**. At the hearing, members of the public may formally submit an oral comment under CEQA on the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. The meeting facilities are accessible for persons with disabilities. All requests for reasonable accommodations and/or language services must be submitted 72 hours in advance of the scheduled meeting date. Please contact the public outreach team at 800-881-5799 or call the California Relay Service at 711. All public hearings will be wheelchair accessible. Please call the Authority at (916) 324-1541, or check the Authority website (www.hsr.ca.gov), for more information, including up-to-date information on the planned hearing and open house.

COPIES OF THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL EIR/EIS

Visit the Authority website (www.hsr.ca.gov) to view and download the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. The Authority website also contains technical reports that inform the analysis provided in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. You may also request an electronic copy on compact disc (CD) of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS by calling (916) 324-1541. Printed and electronic copies of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS have been placed at the following public libraries and county clerk offices:

- Chowchilla Branch Library: 300 Kings Avenue, Chowchilla, CA 93610
- Madera County Library: 121 North G Street, Madera, CA 93637
- Merced County Library: 2100 O St, Merced, CA 95340
- Madera County Clerk: 200 W 4th St, Madera, CA 93637
- Merced County Clerk: 2222 M St, Merced, CA 95340

Printed and electronic copies of the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, along with electronic copies of the associated technical reports, and the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS, also are available for review during business hours at the Authority's office at 770 L Street, Suite 620 MS-1, Sacramento, CA, and the Authority's office at 1111 H Street, Fresno, CA.

The Authority does not discriminate on the basis of disability and, upon request, will provide reasonable accommodation to ensure equal access to its programs, services, and activities.

The Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS is also available for reference at: www.hsr.ca.gov. You may also request an electronic copy on CD of the Merced to Fresno Final EIR/EIS by calling (916) 324-1541. This document is not currently part of the public review and comment process in that it was completed and finalized in 2012, however, it is available for review and reference.