



March 3, 2021

The Honorable Richard Bloom
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3
State Capitol, Room 6026
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: High-Speed Rail Funding – STRONG SUPPORT

Dear Assembly Member Bloom:

On behalf of the above organizations, we write to urge your strong support of the Governor’s investment in high-speed rail, as proposed in his 2021-22 budget.

Now more than ever, it is time for California leaders to recognize the importance of continued investment in high-speed rail. With a revitalized partnership between the state and the Biden Administration, California is closer than ever towards realizing a world-class high-speed rail system. Just last week, Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg reiterated that President Biden is “a big believer in passenger rail” and that the United States should be “leading the world when it comes to high-speed rail.”¹ President Biden, aka “Amtrak Joe,” promised a “railroad revolution” during his campaign.²

As recently as yesterday, Acting Federal Railroad Administration Amit Bose remarked, “California has taken the lead nationally to advance high-speed rail, starting an economically transformative project in the Central Valley and assuming the challenges that come with that leadership. The U.S. Department of Transportation looks forward to partnering with California as it leads the way to build back better.”³ Given the Biden Administration’s willingness to support high-speed rail, California’s goal of connecting communities, creating good union jobs, and addressing climate change is well within sight. To reach our ambitious carbon goals we need to get aggressive about supporting zero emission modes of transportation.

Despite the pandemic and recession, high-speed rail continues to be a truly once in a generation economic stimulus generator. The project has created over 5,200 high paid jobs, with 77% of these

¹ Tim Sheehan, “Will President Biden restore high-speed rail funds that Trump took away from California?,” *The Fresno Bee*, February 7, 2021, available at: <https://www.fresnobee.com/news/local/high-speed-rail/article249046875.html>.

² Thomas Pallini, “Biden promised a ‘railroad revolution’ that could see faster trains and a return to Amtrak’s nostalgic past—here’s what Americans might see,” *Business Insider*, November 15, 2020, available at: [Biden promised a 'railroad revolution' that could see faster trains and a return to Amtrak's nostalgic past — here's what Americans might see \(msn.com\)](https://www.businessinsider.com/biden-promised-a-railroad-revolution-that-could-see-faster-trains-and-a-return-to-amtrak-s-nostalgic-past-2020-11).

³ Acting FRA Amit Bose, “[Statement of Acting Federal Railroad Administrator Amit Bose on California High-Speed Rail | FRA \(dot.gov\)](https://www.fra.dot.gov/press-releases/2021-02-09-statement-of-acting-federal-railroad-administrator-amit-bose-on-california-high-speed-rail),” February 9, 2021.

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workers coming from eight counties in the Central Valley. Additionally, 55% of total project expenditure occurred in disadvantaged communities throughout California, spurring economic activity for 570 small businesses that are working on the project. As for environmental benefits, the system will be 100% renewably powered and is being built sustainably, with a goal of being net-zero. Finally, 6,000 trees have been planted during construction and 97% of construction waste has been recycled.

This project is also already easing traffic congestion in areas of the state where existing rail lines have been improved in preparation for high-speed rail trains. Furthermore, high-speed rail opens up the economically disadvantaged Central Valley to education and career opportunities in Bay Area and Southern California. According to the Legislative Analyst's Office, in order to accommodate expected population increases over the next few decades, the state would need to build 4,300 new miles of new highway lanes, 115 additional airport gates, and four new airport runways at a cost of \$150 billion. All of that would only add more new climate harming cars, planes, and trucks to an already congested transportation network. If just one rail crossing update can have that much of an impact, the impact of the entire project once completed will move California even closer to its GHG emission goals.

We believe that the high-speed rail project is heading in the right direction and any effort to deprive the project of funding, when it is already creating jobs, is shortsighted. For the above reasons, we ask you to stand with our members and support the Governor's continued investment in high-speed rail.

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opeiu#29/afl-cio

cc: Members, Assembly Budget Subcommittee 3