NEPA/CEQA and California High-Speed Rail: Where We Have Been and Where We Are Headed

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Introduction/Objective
Created in 1996, the California High-Speed Rail Authority has pursued the vision of a high-speed rail system connecting California’s major metropolitan areas. Despite major engineering, institutional, and funding challenges, over time the vision has remained focused and consistent. At the same time, the Authority has responded to a changing planning and political environment, which can be traced through a review of its 2000, 2004, 2008 and 2012 Business Plans.

Where We Have Been
The Revised 2012 Business Plan outlines five phases to foster construction:

1. Early Stages: for Immediate Statewide Benefits
Construction of dedicated high-speed rail infrastructure begins in the Central Valley with the first segment of the Initial Operating Section (IOS) Service will launch in 2018, the current San Joaquin rail system will use this new infrastructure to cut travel times by 10 percent of the current Amtrak AutoTrain service. In 2020, the San Joaquin system will be linked to the Electrified Bay to Basin System.

2. Initial High-Speed Rail Operations
Service will launch in 2022.

3. Electrification
Electrified Bay Area Regular-Service will launch in 2024.

4. Phase 2 Initial Staged System
搀於San Francisco Bay Area. The revised 2012 Business Plan outlines five phases to foster construction:

1. Early Stages: for Immediate Statewide Benefits
Completion of the high-speed rail system infrastructure in the Central Valley will be the first segment of the Initial Operating Section (IOS). The first segment of the Initial Operating Section (IOS) Service will launch in 2018, the current San Joaquin rail system will use this new infrastructure to cut travel times by 10 percent of the current Amtrak AutoTrain service. In 2020, the San Joaquin system will be linked to the Electrified Bay to Basin System.

2. Initial High-Speed Rail Operations
Service will launch in 2022.

3. Electrification
Electrified Bay Area Regular-Service will launch in 2024.

4. Phase 2 Initial Staged System
Completion of High-Speed Rail implementation is designed to serve the 40 million annual passenger demand for the Phase 1 high-speed rail service as projected in the 2011 California High-Speed Rail Authority Business Plan. The High-Speed Rail Authority Business Plan assumes the use of six car trains in each direction on weekdays in a day trains in each direction on weekdays in a 2.5 hours.

5. Phase 3 Full-Service System
Completion of the Phase 2 and 3 extension work will result in the delivery of what is referred to as the “full service” system. As depicted in the 2011 California High-Speed Rail Authority Business Plan, this service will operate between San Francisco Bay Area and Los Angeles County.

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