

Tulare County Association of Governments

AGENDA ITEM IV-H

July 20, 2009

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SUBJECT:

Action: Authorize a letter indicating preference for California High Speed Rail alternative alignment D-2

BACKGROUND:

On November 4th, 2008 the voters of California approved Proposition 1A, paving the way for high speed rail in California. The project is currently in the California environmental process (CEQA) and the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement for the Merced to Bakersfield section of the proposed California High-Speed Train (HST) System is underway.

DISCUSSION:

As the lead agency for the high speed rail project, the California High-Speed Rail Authority is currently analyzing potential project alternatives for the Project-Level EIR/EIS for the Merced to Bakersfield section of the proposed HST system. Currently there are two alternative alignments being considered along with the preferred alignment. The preferred alignment has the train running on the west side of Hanford, alternative alignment A-1 runs on the east side of Hanford, and alternative alignment D-2 runs just west of Visalia (Attachment 1).

The Tulare County High Speed Rail Committee met to discuss the different alignments and decided that alignment D-2 would best serve the region for the reasons outlined below:

- Alignment D-2 allows for a station in Tulare County near Visalia and provides the greatest access for the Tulare/Kings County residents.
- Alignment D-2 is near the Visalia Airport and will benefit from \$40 million dollars of road/intersection improvements.
- The alignment would benefit from potential light rail access connecting Visalia and Tulare, which has \$10 million dollars of Measure R funding.
- The alignment is adjacent to Caldwell, a multi-modal corridor.

This letter has been developed in close cooperation with staff from member agencies and would serve as a comment letter expressing unified interest of those on the Tulare County High Speed Rail Committee. Due to time constraints the letter will be provided at the TCAG Board meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Authorize a letter indicating preference for California High Speed Rail alternative alignment D-2

FISCAL IMPACT:

None.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Map Showing Alignment Option