



SAN FRANCISCO
PLANNING + URBAN RESEARCH
ASSOCIATION

654 Mission Street
San Francisco, California
94105

415.781.8726 t
415.781.7291 f

www.spur.org

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A. Lee Blitch

April 1, 2011

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Mr. Ray LaHood, Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Mr. Joseph C. Szabo, Administrator
Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

RE: Request for Re-direction of Florida High-Speed Rail Funds to California

Dear Secretary LaHood and Administrator Szabo:

On behalf of the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association (SPUR), I am writing to urge you to re-direct all federal high-speed rail funding originally designated for Florida, to California.

SPUR, the San Francisco Planning and Urban Research Association, is a broad-based public policy organization that works to support good planning and good government. We represent more than 4,000 individuals and businesses in the Bay Area. SPUR has major objectives for transit-oriented development, sustainable economic development, and regional planning. The California High Speed Rail project is integral to the vision of smart growth that we are working to achieve in our region.

California has made significant progress since its initial receipt of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funding in 2010. The initial ARRA funding, along with \$616 million in federal funds redistributed from Wisconsin and Ohio, and matching funds from California's Proposition 1A, bring the total available funds to begin construction to \$5.5 billion. Construction on California's starter segment begins in September 2012, creating 110,000 construction jobs that will put California's economy on a fast track to recovery.

The California High Speed Rail Authority's recently initiated the "Request for Expression of Interest" (RFEI) process. The RFEI process will help shape the development of the Authority's overall procurement process, and define how businesses can compete for high-speed rail contracts. The Authority anticipates issuing the request for proposals at the end of this year for California's starter segment, approximately 120 miles through California's Central Valley, which will ultimately serve as a "test track". This test track will give the Federal Railroad Administration the ability to certify that California's system will be capable of running 220 miles per hour. California's system is the only system in the nation proposed to reach true high speeds of 220 miles per hour (mph).

California is best positioned to deliver the nation's first High Speed Train for the following reasons:

- 1) **Passage of High Speed Rail Bond Measure** - California is the only state in the nation to have passed a high-speed rail bond measure, Proposition 1A, of 2008, which demonstrates the public's commitment to funding the nation's first high-speed train system. We have a public commitment of \$9.95 billion in new funding which provides a guarantee to the private sector that if they put money into California's High Speed Train project, it will be successful and it will be profitable. This new money is in addition to the \$247 million the state has invested in the project over the past dozen years.
- 2) **State Matching Funds** - California has received \$2.987 billion dollars in federal funding from the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act of 2008 (PRIIA), and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Coupled with \$9 billion dollars in bond funding from the passage of Proposition 1A, the High-Speed Rail Act, **the total investment available to date for California's high speed train will be \$11.987 billion – more than 28%** of the \$42.6 billion dollars required for total completion of Phase 1 from San Francisco to Anaheim.
- 3) **World-class High Speeds of 220 Miles per Hour** - California's high speed train system is the only nation-wide project offering world-class high speeds of 220 miles per hour. These high speeds are necessary in order to provide passenger service which is competitive with airline service with regard to travel times and ticket prices.
- 4) **FRA Approval** – California was the first state in the nation to have a plan approved by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). California's project level environmental impact report was originally approved in July, 2008. California has thirteen years of engineering and design work in place. We are ready to serve as a technological and business model for the rest of the nation.
- 5) **Global Participation - Memorandums of Understanding with Other Countries** - California has entered into "Memorandums of Understanding" with 8 countries which have a proven track record of building and operating successful high-speed train systems: Spain, France, Germany, Italy, Korea, Japan, China and Belgium. More than 135 senior managers, planners, engineers, and operators with significant project work on one or more of the high-speed train projects in Europe and Asia, as well as the Northeast Corridor, are currently involved in the planning and engineering of the California high speed rail project. Experts on this project have guided the planning, construction, and/or operation of HST systems around the world representing hundreds of billions of dollars in infrastructure development.
- 6) **Oversight & Financial Accountability** - Proposition 1A ensures protection of federal, state, and private financial investments by establishing additional oversight and accountability standards. Proposition 1A requires the following:
 - a) Creation of a peer review committee;
 - b) Creation of a pre-appropriation review process;
 - c) Creation of a pre-expenditure review process;
 - d) Independent review of financing plans; and
 - e) Independent audit of all expenditures.

- 7) **Project Delivery** – Following the initial announcement of the selection criteria for ARRA funds, California had \$16 billion dollars in high speed rail projects that qualified for funding. California’s entire 800 mile system has a completed and certified program-level environmental review document. California has partnered with the FRA in these studies and efforts. As described in the State’s October 2009 ARRA funding application, four project sections are targeted to complete environmental review by September 2011, and to start construction by September 2012, with construction completion by September 2017.
- 8) **Bi-Partisan Support** - California is unified behind its high-speed train project. The project received bi-partisan support from the Legislature, former Republican Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, current Democratic Governor Jerry Brown, and California voters. In addition, the California Labor Federation, California Chamber of Commerce, and the Sierra Club of California have all come together in support of our high speed train project.

We at SPUR believe California is ready to be a model for the rest of the nation seeking to build high speed trains systems. We share a passion for this project with our global partners because we know that revolutions in technology from around the world are being shared during this experience. New technologies will provide workers in each of our respective countries with valuable training and new skills as we enter a new wave of transportation innovation.

High speed rail will harness the enthusiasm and talent of our young people in a way that no other industry has since the “dot com boom.” This project will help us to educate our next generation of inventors and entrepreneurs. Furthermore, as we capture the imaginations of our young people, who will be fascinated by a train that can run at 220 miles per hour, we’re teaching an entire generation the value of global cooperation and shared success.

On behalf of SPUR, I urge you to re-direct the State of Florida’s high-speed rail funds to California.

Sincerely,



Gabriel Metcalf
Executive Director, SPUR