

February 26, 2024

Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
United States Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Avenue SE
Washington, D.C. 20590

Secretary Buttigieg:

On behalf of the Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO (TTD), and the hundreds of thousands of workers we represent in the passenger rail and building trades sectors, I write to express my support for the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (Authority) application for Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 funding from the USDOT RAISE Grant Program.

To close out 2023 the California High-Speed Rail Authority marked a historic milestone, announcing the creation of more than 12,000 construction jobs since the start of project construction. Most of these jobs have gone to Central Valley residents. This accomplishment is the result of the project's total investment of more than \$11.2 billion since 2006 in its planning and construction.

The Authority's RAISE application for the Merced Integrated Multimodal Station Project (Project) is to fund Final Design and related third-party coordination for a planned mobility hub in downtown Merced, California, designed to maximize seamless multimodal opportunities.

The integrated multimodal station in downtown Merced will allow travelers on High-Speed Rail, the San Joaquins service, and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) to connect seamlessly at one station (rather than three different station locations connected by buses). The Project is a vital element of the 171-mile California Inaugural High-Speed Service between Merced and Bakersfield, which itself is a critical milestone of the California State Rail Plan.

The Authority is requesting federal funding of \$15.88 million. The State of California will provide matching funds from the Authority's Cap-and-Trade revenue of \$3.9 million, for a total grant-funded scope of \$19.8 million. The Project will serve as a "Northern California Gateway" to Sacramento, the Bay Area, other San Joaquin Valley destinations, and points south for high-speed intercity passenger rail and coordinated regional rail and transit services, including:

- High-Speed Rail service, initially between Merced and Bakersfield;
- Amtrak's realigned San Joaquins rail service toward Oakland, Sacramento, the Far North and North Coast;
- The planned Ceres-Merced Extension of ACE, with service to San José, as well as a planned Sacramento connection; and
- Interregional and Merced County Transit bus services.

The Project and the Inaugural High-Speed Service will operate and provide services to underserved communities in California's Central Valley, home to 6 million people, and improve the health, safety, access, connectivity, and economic vitality of those residents.

This RAISE Grant Program application is part of an ongoing federal-state partnership that, to date, has provided approximately \$28.7 billion in funding for California High-Speed Rail. 76% (\$21.9 billion) of that funding is

from the State of California and 24% is from the federal government (\$6.8 billion). With work well underway throughout the State, we urge you to award funds to further advance the California High-Speed Rail project by supporting the Authority's application for the Merced Integrated Multimodal Station Project. For the above reasons, we urge you to fully fund the RAISE application of the California High-Speed Rail Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'G. Regan', enclosed within a circular scribble.

Greg Regan, President
Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO