



May 29, 2015

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The Honorable Joel Fajardo, Mayor
The Honorable Sylvia Ballin, Mayor Pro Tem
Honorable City Council Members
City of San Fernando
117 MacNeil St,
San Fernando, CA 91340

Dear Mayor Fajardo, Mayor Pro Tem Ballin, and Councilmembers Lopez, Gonzales and Soto:

Thank you for your letter dated April 20, 2015 regarding potential alignments being studied for the Palmdale to Burbank section of the high-speed rail system. I appreciate your taking the time to share your position with us, because obtaining the input of those communities near potential routes will be critical to developing and selecting the best possible alignment. This is an essential component of our work and helps to guide our development of the alignments we study during the environmental process that will ultimately lead to the identification of the single best route for construction.

As you know, the fundamental purpose of the environmental review process is to conduct a comprehensive assessment of potential impacts and mitigations of each alternative. We are still at the beginning of this thorough process; a point that I emphasized during my recent site visit. This process must consider not only your community's input, but also the safety and operation of the train, the protection of natural resources, and the character of all the communities along the currently proposed routes. We are committed to conducting an open and transparent process based on open dialogue and consensus building.

For the past year, we have engaged in a comprehensive public education, outreach, and engagement program in this project section. We have held more than 165 individual and group meetings along the route, or the equivalent of one meeting approximately every working day and a half over the course of the past year. This has included four rounds of broad community meetings, two rounds of community working group meetings, briefings to community, business, and civic organizations, a Board meeting in September 2014, and the planned Board meeting coming up in June.

In addition, I have personally visited many of the communities between Palmdale and Burbank, including yours, and talked to representatives of these varied and unique areas. I appreciate the time you took during my recent visit to share your concerns about the current alignments, specifically the route along San Fernando Road and the existing railroad corridor. It was very educational for me to see first-hand the nature of your

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downtown area and the challenges that one of our alignment concepts may pose for public safety response, physical barriers, and other key community features.

Your letter cites these issues in detail, including environmental justice, safety and security, impacts on pedestrian movement, traffic and circulation, noise vibration and dust, existing utilities and infrastructure, and community compatibility and aesthetics. I can assure you that all of these aspects will be considered and studied in detail as part of the environmental review. This analysis will serve as the basis for the ultimate selection of a preferred alternative. By thoroughly studying a variety of routes to arrive at the preferred alternative, we not only fulfill the requirements of the environmental review process, but will also rigorously document the findings about all the routes. This ensures that once the process reaches a conclusion on the best possible route, other routes previously considered are not brought back for re-examination.

It is possible that during this process, the Authority could choose to narrow the scope of environmental studies and remove certain potential alignments from further consideration. This step, should it be taken, would be based on in-depth technical analyses of a wide variety of factors including community impacts and the safety, security and operational requirements of the train. We are not yet at that point.

We understand this process can be difficult for communities near potential alignments, and that you are seeking answers to your many questions. Though I am unable to provide those specific answers at this time, I assure you that they will be forthcoming after a thorough and careful review process has been conducted.

Thank you again for your letter, I look forward to many further conversations with you and your community as we move forward to plan a high-speed rail system that connects all our communities to a more prosperous future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dan Richard", written in a cursive style.

Dan Richard
Chair, Board of Directors
California High-Speed Rail Authority