



SACOG Board of Directors

May 22, 2008

Recommendation of Support of AB 3034 (Galgiani and Ma) – Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act

Issue: Should SACOG take a position to support AB 3034 (Galgiani and Ma)?

Recommendation: Because there was no quorum, the Government Relations & Public Affairs Committee did not take an official vote, but it was the consensus of those attending that they recommend that the Board adopt a support position.

Committee Action/Discussion: Assemblymembers Cathleen Galgiani and Fiona Ma have introduced AB 3034, which replaces existing legislation and establishes how funds from a High Speed Rail (HSR) bond measure scheduled for the November 4, 2008 ballot would be distributed. The bill would require Federal and State financial participation in order to “trigger” State bond fund sales for an HSR system connecting Northern and Southern California. The language of the bill makes possible the consideration of the Altamont Pass alignment as the principle ingress/egress from the Central Valley to the Bay Area (although HSR Staff is still recommending the significantly less Sacramento area friendly Pacheco Pass alignment).

SACOG Staff is supportive overall of HSR, but has had concerns that land use issues were not being adequately addressed, particularly in the Central Valley. By constructing the HSR system as proposed, there is a potential for extensive spread out growth around Central Valley stations, which would create sprawl, increase air pollution, and add to net traffic congestion. The HRS system would degrade community life if it encourages a commuter land use pattern in which people live in the Central Valley and then commute by train to jobs in Los Angeles or the Bay Area.

Staff originally recommended an “oppose unless amended” position, but has changed its recommendation to support based on California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) staff’s recent assurances that it will include language in the final Environmental Impact Statement/Report which will commit CHRSA to 1) completing an economic study to determine what kinds of businesses and jobs make sense in the Central Valley to ensure ridership is not primarily for commuter trips and (2) requiring priority station siting be given to locations that have adopted transit-oriented development (TOD) land use plans for proposed station areas.

Assembly Transportation Committee passed the bill on April 14, 2008 and re-referred it to the Appropriations Committee.

Approved by:

Mike McKeever
Executive Director

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Key Staff: Rebecca Sloan, Manager of Public & Government Affairs, (916) 340-6224
Olin Woods, Project Delivery Manager, (916) 340-6276
Erik Johnson, Public Information Coordinator, (916) 340-6247