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Bullet train's Central Valley route still on fast track

SACRAMENTO

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- **Rail authority readies application for stimulus money**
- **'The state must find a viable surface transportation alternative to ease auto and air traffic congestion'**

The California High-Speed Rail Authority has approved its "scope of projects" that could qualify for federal stimulus funds, including the bullet train's route between Bakersfield and Merced in the Central Valley.

Based on its adopted phasing plan and progress in the environmental and planning process, the Authority has identified Bakersfield/Merced as well as the Anaheim/Los Angeles, and San Jose/San Francisco tracks as three initial segments meeting Federal Railroad Administration requirements for construction funding. Each of the three corridors is critical to the success of the project, demonstrates independent utility, and is completing project level environmental review, the authority says.

The total package approved Thursday includes submissions for each of the proposed California high-speed rail system corridor segments, thereby encompassing the Authority's full system development plan.

The board's action was required so that the state of California could meet a July 10 "pre-application" deadline imposed by the Federal Railroad Administration for a share of \$8 billion in stimulus funding for high-speed trains under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The Authority says it is developing project submissions for completion of preliminary and project level environmental work in six corridors including: Los Angeles to San Diego; Los Angeles to Palmdale; Palmdale to Bakersfield; Merced to San Jose; Sacramento to Merced; and Altamont.

The board also elected Anaheim Mayor Curt Pringle to be its chairman, replacing Judge Quentin Kopp who had served two terms as chairman. Former California Assemblymember Tom Umberg was elected vice-chairman.

"The state must find a viable surface transportation alternative to ease auto and air traffic congestion between major urban centers and high population growth areas like the Central Valley," says Mr. Pringle.

"We have obtained environmental certification for the general statewide alignment and station locations for the 800-mile system designed to carry over 100 million people by year 2030, as well as secured California state bond proceeds resulting from passage of Proposition 1A," he says. "These are the kinds of things that position the state very competitively to secure matching federal funds through ARRA to begin construction on three key segments and to complete the preliminary engineering work on the linking segments."

Mr. Pringle represented part of Orange County for eight years in the Assembly during the 1990s. He was first elected mayor of Anaheim in 2002. He also serves as a board member of the Orange County Transportation Authority.

Mr. Umberg is an attorney specializing in federal and state policy and regulatory matters. In 1995, He was an Assistant U.S. Attorney in Los Angeles and Orange County.

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