BAY AREA
AIR QUALITY
MANAGEMENT
DISTRICT



September 23, 2020

Mark A. McLoughlin
California High-Speed Rail Authority
100 Paseo de San Antonio, Suite 300
San Jose, CA 95113

Re: California High-Speed Rail Authority San Francisco to San Jose Project Section Draft EIR/EIS

Dear Mr. McLoughlin,

Bay Area Air Quality Management District (Air District) staff has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (DEIR/EIS) for the California High-Speed Rail Authority's (the Authority) San Francisco to San Jose Project Section (Project). The proposed California High-Speed Rail (HSR) will connect the major population centers of Sacramento, the San Francisco Bay Area, the Central Valley, Los Angeles, the Inland Empire, Orange County, and San Diego using state-of-the-art, electrically powered, high-speed, steel-wheel-on-steel-rail technology, including contemporary safety, signaling, and automated train-control systems, with trains capable of operating at up to 220 miles per hour over a dedicated track alignment.

The Project would construct approximately 49 miles of blended system infrastructure with Caltrain and HSR service sharing tracks; up to 6 miles of dedicated HSR infrastructure; stations at 4th and King Street, Millbrae, and San Jose Diridon; a light maintenance facility (LMF) in Brisbane; and an additional passing track option. Two Project alternatives (Alternatives A and B) were evaluated and Alternative A has been identified as the preferred alternative.

**Additional Construction Emissions Reduction Measures**

The DEIR/EIS anticipates that Project construction-related nitrogen oxides (NOx) emissions will lead to a significant and unavoidable impact after incorporating all best available on-site control measures (Impact AQ#1). The impact would be reduced to less than significant by funding off-site emissions reduction projects in San Francisco Bay Area Air Basin (AQ-MM#1). The Air District is aware of the proposed mitigation and looks forward to working with the Authority to reduce NOx emissions in the Bay Area.

The Air District strongly supports the implementation of all available on-site emission reduction measures before relying on off-site mitigation measures. As Project construction is scheduled for years 2021 through 2026, the Air District believes that additional on-site emission reduction measures are possible through equipment improvements that will be made available during Project construction.

The Air District recommends the Authority make a commitment to use only zero-emission on-road and off-road trucks and construction equipment or otherwise use equipment with the best available NOx control technology offered at the time of construction. This requirement could include, but is not limited to, dump, water, boom, and concrete trucks, and off-road material and equipment hauling equipment.

In addition, the DEIR/EIS anticipates that the fine particulate matter ($PM_{2.5}$) and particulate matter ($PM_{10}$) from construction emissions will lead to a significant and unavoidable impact after incorporating all best available on-site control measures (Impact AQ#3). Implementation of zero-emission equipment as recommended above to reduce NOx emissions will also reduce PM and PM2.5 emissions. Air District staff further recommends incorporating additional measures to further reduce and control fugitive dust in AQ-IAMF#1. Examples of additional measures to be considered include, but are not limited to:

- Install dust curtains, plastic tarps or windbreaks, or plant tree windbreaks on the property line on windward and down windward sides of station and light maintenance facility construction areas, as necessary, and
- Establish a hotline for surrounding community members to call and report visible dust problems so that the Authority can promptly fix those problems; post signs around the site with the hotline number and ensure that the number is given to adjacent residents, schools and businesses.

**Ban Use of Diesel Generators During Construction and Operations**

The DEIR/EIS Appendix 3.3-A Appendix C Construction Emissions Assumptions does not include the use of diesel generators on the equipment list. If diesel generators will be used during construction, this equipment should be included in equipment lists and the DEIR/EIS analysis. The Air District recommends that the Project use grid power whenever possible rather than relying on diesel generators at the construction sites. If grid power is not available, the Authority should require the use of alternatives to diesel power, such as battery storage, fuel cell, and natural gas generators. Regardless of the type of power used to power construction activities, these emissions should be accounted for in the air quality analysis. If not included, the DEIR/EIS underestimates the air quality emissions from the Project. Diesel generators should also be banned during operations at the stations and light maintenance facility. At these sites, the Authority also should require the use of cleaner backup power.

**Health Risk Assessment Methodology**

Air District staff recommends that the DEIR/EIS include a breakdown of all sources included in the HRA completed for the project that contribute to cumulative health risks, for example those from the Project (e.g., from generators), nearby permitted facilities, and mobile sources such as SR-87, I-280, SR-82, SR-92, I-880, US-101, Caltrain, Altamont Corridor Express, Transit America Services, San Jose airport, San Francisco airport, and activity along the Caltrain corridor.

To address cumulative impacts and potential health risks from the Project's operations, Air District staff recommends the DEIR/EIS include an analysis of potential local risks and hazards associated with

toxic air contaminants (TACs) and $PM_{2.5}$, including emissions from the Project itself and nearby stationary and mobile sources. If the Project chooses to pursue using emergency generators, staff recommends that the DEIR/EIS address how the Project will comply with Air District Regulation 2, Rule 5: New Source Review of Toxic Air Contaminants.

Air District staff recommends that the Authority evaluate construction and operation activities to determine health risk to the maximum exposed individual as well as the nearest sensitive receptors. The DEIR/EIS HRA analysis should clearly state the maximum exposed individual from Project impacts.

The Air District can provide technical assistance and support to the Authority to ensure that best available data and methodologies are used in the Health Risk Assessment; please contact Alison Kirk (contact information below) to discuss further.

**Compliance with Air District Regulations and Permitting Requirements**

The Project may require compliance with Air District Regulation 6, Rule 6: Prohibition of Trackout for construction sites where the total land area covered by construction activities and/or disturbed surfaces at the site are one acre or larger. Due to the long linear nature of the Project, with up to 49 miles of embankment or trench expected, the DEIR/EIS should discuss Regulation 6, Rule 6 as it applies to the Project. To discuss the Project application, please visit https://www.baaqmd.gov/rules-and-compliance/rules/regulation-6-rule-6-prohibition-of-trackout and consult with the Compliance and Enforcement section at (415) 749-4795 or compliance@baaqmd.gov.

In addition, the Project may require permits (Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate) from the Air District for emergency standby generators (diesel engines). Because the Project also includes an automatic train control system that requires communication towers, the Authority should discuss with the Air District any additional equipment that may require permits. To apply for an Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate for engines, please visit: https://www.baaqmd.gov/permits/apply-for-a-permit/engine-permits. To apply for an Authority to Construct/Permit to Operate for any other equipment, please visit https://www.baaqmd.gov/permits/apply-for-a-permit. If you have any questions regarding the Air District's permits, please contact Barry Young, Senior Advanced Projects Advisor, at byoung@baaqmd.gov or (415) 940-9641 to discuss permit requirements.

We encourage the Authority to contact Air District staff with any questions and/or to request assistance during the environmental review process. If you have questions regarding these comments, please contact Alison Kirk, Principal Environmental Planner, at (415) 749-5169 or akirk@baaqmd.gov.

Sincerely,

Greg Nudd
Deputy Air Pollution Control Officer

Cc: Air District Board of Directors