

16 INTRODUCTION

This introduction explains the organization of and how to reference comment letters and responses to comments included in this Final Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). The comments and responses to comments section contains public comments on the 2017 Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the Fresno to Bakersfield Section of the High-Speed Rail Project and responses.

16.1 Standard Responses to Frequently Raised Comments

As part of the public review process for the 2017 Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) received approximately 285 written comment letters and verbal comments at public hearings; these 285 submissions contained 1,068 individual comments on the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS and on the proposed project generally. Notwithstanding the number of submissions and comments, taken as a whole, the comments are minor and the responses to those comments are confined to factual corrections or explanations of why the comments do not warrant additional response. The Authority has therefore prepared a chapter of standard responses to address the most frequently raised issues. The standard responses provide a comprehensive response to an issue so that multiple aspects of the issue are addressed in an organized manner in one location. This reduces repetition of responses. When an individual comment raises an issue discussed in a standard response, the response to the individual comment includes a cross-reference to the appropriate standard response. The standard responses are provided in Chapter 17 in English and in Chapter 18 in Spanish.

16.2 Individual Responses to Written and Verbal Comments

Following the standard responses, the Authority provides responses to individual written and verbal comments.

The individual letters and comments included and addressed are organized and numbered as follows:

- Federal Agencies (Chapter 19)
- State Agencies (Chapter 20)
- Elected Officials (Chapter 21)
- Local Agencies (Chapter 22)
- Business and Organization Comments (Chapter 23)
- Individual Comments (Chapter 24)
- Public Hearing Comments (Chapter 25)

Each written submission and oral presentation can be found under the appropriate category, by name, or if representing an organization, the name of their organization. If commenters gave oral or written testimony at one of the public hearings, they will find their comments, submissions, and responses under “Public Hearing Comments.” Each written comment letter sent to the Authority or the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) was assigned a number. Each comment letter and public hearing transcript has brackets in the left-hand margin with identification numbers for each comment. Some letters or oral statements have been treated as a single comment; in other submissions, multiple comments have been identified, which have been numbered and responded to individually. The responses to comment(s) are located at the end of each letter or transcript. Each response is labeled with the letter/testimony identifier and comment number that relates back to that particular bracketed comment.

Some comments from the same agency, organization, or individual were submitted more than once (e.g., letter was first faxed and then mailed). These duplicate comment letters are included only once and are not repeated multiple times in the respective chapter.

A number of written comment submissions included lengthy attachments to the comment letters or provided web links to supporting materials. In preparing the Final Supplemental EIS and responses to comments, every attachment provided with comment submissions or identified by a web link was reviewed and evaluated. In those cases where attachments included additional

comments on the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, the comments were delineated and responded to. In those cases where attachments or web links contained information or studies in support of the written comment submission, the material was considered in developing the response.

The table of contents, provided below, includes a listing of each comment, submission number, and the page where it can be found.

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