

California High-Speed Rail: Fresno to Bakersfield Section

Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement

Pursuant to:

California Environmental Quality Act, P.R.C. 21000 et seq.; State of California CEQA Guidelines, California Administrative Code, 15000 et seq.; and National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332 et seq.), 40 C.F.R. Part 1500, and 64 Fed. Reg. 28545

Prepared by the

California High-Speed Rail Authority

and the

Federal Railroad Administration

With Cooperating Agencies:

United States Army Corps of Engineers,

Surface Transportation Board,

and

U.S. Bureau of Reclamation



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Abstract: This document considers, describes, and summarizes the environmental impacts of an approximately 23-mile portion of the Fresno to Bakersfield Section High-Speed Rail (HSR) Project, which is an approximately 114-mile portion of a larger HSR System that is intended to connect to sections traveling west to San Francisco, south to Los Angeles, and later, north to Sacramento. The project is designed as a steel-wheel-on-steel-railway completely grade-separated from other modes. The need for this project is directly related to the population growth and increased intercity travel demand over the next 20 years, and beyond, and the increased travel delays and congestion that would result on California's highways and airports. On May 7, 2014, the Authority Board certified the Fresno to Bakersfield Section Final EIR/EIS and approved the Preferred Alternative south from Fresno to 7th Standard Road, the northern city limits of Bakersfield. Based on an analysis of potential impacts and substantive agency and public comments, including comments filed after issuance of the Final EIS, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) selected the Preferred Alternative by issuing its Record of Decision on June 27, 2014. On

June 5, 2014, the City of Bakersfield filed a lawsuit challenging the Authority's EIR and approvals under the California Environmental Quality Act. The City of Bakersfield noted that the Preferred Alternative alignment identified in the Fresno to Bakersfield Section Final EIR/EIS would severely impact the City's facilities, freeway projects, and businesses, including its Municipal Services Corporation Yard, Rabobank Arena parking, in addition to private residences, businesses, schools, churches, and medical facilities. In a Settlement Agreement between the City of Bakersfield and the Authority, the two agencies agreed to work together to develop and study an alternative that would be acceptable to the City and meet the Authority's design requirements. The Fresno to Bakersfield Section Locally Generated Alternative (F-B LGA) evolved from this mutual cooperation and subsequent public input and is the subject of this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS, a supplement to the Fresno to Bakersfield Section Final EIR/EIS. The F-B LGA provides an alternative alignment for a portion of the Fresno to Bakersfield Section between the City of Shafter and the City of Bakersfield. The F-B LGA F-Street Station (F Street Station) would be located at the intersection of State Route 204 (SR 204) and F Street. A maintenance of infrastructure facility (MOIF) would be located along the F-B LGA in northern Shafter between Poplar Avenue and Fresno Avenue. Potential environmental impacts from the F-B LGA include: displacement of commercial, residential, and agricultural properties; increases in noise; increases in traffic at the F Street Station; impacts on historic and archaeological sites; impacts on parks and recreational resources; visual impacts; impacts on sensitive biological resources and wetlands; and uses of energy. Mitigation measures are described to address impacts identified in the Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. This California High-Speed Rail (HSR) F-B LGA Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS is being made available to the public in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

FRA plans on issuing a single document that consists of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision pursuant to 49 U.S.C. § 304a unless it is determined that statutory criteria or practicability considerations preclude issuance of such a combined document.

Visit the California High-Speed Rail Authority [website](#), where you can:

- View and download this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS
- Request a CD-ROM of this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS
- Locate a library near you to review a hardcopy of this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS

Printed copies have been provided at a number of repositories throughout the project area, including at the main libraries in Shafter and Bakersfield.

Additional Information

As permitted under the Surface Transportation Project Delivery Program (STPD Program), the State of California has requested that the FRA assign its responsibilities under NEPA and related Federal environmental laws to the Authority. The STPD Program is authorized by 23 U.S.C. § 327 and has been implemented by the Federal Highway Administration, FRA, and the Federal Transit Administration through joint regulations defining project and applicant eligibility, the application requirements, and the requirements for a written Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) approving the assignment.

During the application process, the public will be given two opportunities to review application materials and provide comments: one opportunity to review a draft application as part of a state public comment process, and another opportunity provided by FRA to review the final application and a draft MOU. These comment periods do not substitute for, or duplicate, the comment period for this Supplemental Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the Locally Generated Alternative.

Since the Authority is still developing its application, FRA remains the NEPA lead agency under NEPA for this Draft Supplemental EIR/EIS. However, if the Authority formally submits an application and FRA approves the application prior to the Record of Decision (ROD), the Authority may issue the ROD and finalize any related environmental reviews in lieu of FRA.