



Southern California Regional Rail Authority

January 11, 2010

Ms. Bimla Rhinehart
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, Room 2200
Sacramento, CA 95812

Bimla
Dear Ms. Rhinehart:

On behalf of the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA/Metrolink), I am providing comments on the Draft "High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Program Guidelines" prepared by the California Transportation Commission (December 17, 2009).

The SCRRA is identified in the Bond Act as an eligible recipient of \$123 million of the \$760 million available for rail services that will connect to the future High-Speed Passenger Train services and is working with our five member agencies to develop a program of improvements to develop and enhance the connections with the state's planned high-speed trains in the Metrolink service area. To that end, the SCRRA would like to submit the following comments on the Commission's draft guidelines:

1. While the guidelines developed by the Commission state that these funds cannot be used for pre-construction or right-of-way (ROW) project phases, the bond act does not place such restrictions on the use of these funds. SCRRA needs the flexibility to use the funds on pre-construction activities including design and ROW in addition to construction.
2. SCRRA also requests the guidelines allow that state funds, including Proposition 1B funds, can be used as the required local match.
3. SCRRA also request the guidelines provide flexibility on what can be used as local match including the possible allowance of soft match such as prior purchase of rail rights of way.
4. Safety, rehabilitation, and maintenance projects should not be given lower priority than connectivity - the law does not prioritize these categories that ensure safe and reliable connecting service.
5. HSRA should not be given power to review or choose the projects from the \$760 million. - HSRA does not have that role in the law, so the guidelines should not give them that role.
6. Timely use of funds clock should start with sale of the bonds rather than project approval. If there is a long delay in bond sales, the three-year clock may be over before funds are available.
7. As provided with other state transportation bond funds, SCRRA would like to have the opportunity to loan annual shares amongst eligible agencies as needed.

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The SCRRA appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on these draft guidelines for the state's High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Program funds. We look forward to working with the Commission as this program advances so that these funds can be used by the identified agencies to implement projects that will connect with the state's high speed trains.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me at (213) 452-0245 or Joanna Capelle at (213) 247-8049.

Sincerely,



Eric Haley
Chief Executive Officer

cc: SCRRA Board of Directors
SCRRA TAC
Randall Iwasaki, Director-California Department of Transportation
Bill Bronte, Chief, Division of Rail-California Department of Transportation