

Gavin Newsom
Governor

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David S. Kim
Secretary

Notice of Intent by the Secretary of the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) relative to a proposed Memorandum of Understanding between CalSTA, the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), the California High-Speed Rail Authority and DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC, which does business as Brightline West (formerly dba XpressWest) (DXE), to assist in developing a privately funded high-speed train project primarily within the existing I-15 corridor right of way from Apple Valley to Rancho Cucamonga, where a station would be constructed adjacent or connected to the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink train station (the "Cajon Pass Project").

AGENCY: California State Transportation Agency

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: Under the proposed Memorandum of Understanding, the parties will study the Cajon Pass Project's feasibility and its potential for integration with future regional rail service, and engage with each other towards an authorization for DXE to build within Caltrans' existing I-15 right of way to connect clean, electrical, high-speed rail service from the initial Apple Valley terminus in San Bernardino County, and into Los Angeles County, with the Rancho Cucamonga station connection into the Metrolink system.

DATES: CalSTA will accept written and electronic comments on the proposed action of a Memorandum of Understanding about the Cajon Pass Project for a 15-day period after this notice was posted or until 5:00 p.m. on April 13, 2021.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by these methods:

Written: David Matza
California Department of Transportation, District 8 Office
464 West 4th Street, 6th Floor
San Bernardino, California 92401

Electronic: David.matza@dot.ca.gov

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: For general information, including information on how to comment, you may contact David Matza, California Department of Transportation, District 8 Office, 464 West 4th Street, 6th Floor, San Bernardino, CA 92401, or phone (909) 383-4657.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: If you wish CalSTA or Caltrans to withhold your street address, except for the city or town, from public view or from disclosure under the

California Public Records Act, you must state this prominently at the beginning of your written comment. We will honor requests to the extent allowed by law. CalSTA and Caltrans will not consider anonymous comments. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: DXE proposes to construct several privately owned and operated electrified high-speed passenger rail projects between Southern California and Las Vegas, Nevada. The first project will connect Apple Valley, California with Las Vegas on 170 miles of track (the “High Desert Project”). The grade-separated High Desert Project will be constructed primarily in the I-15 right of way on an alignment that will largely run in the median of the existing freeway. Plans are in process to begin construction on the High Desert Project in 2021 and to start revenue service in 2024. Studies performed by DXE forecast that the High Desert Project will provide 30,000 jobs, improve safety, eliminate 100,000 tons of CO2 per year, and support \$6 billion of economic output, while improving quality of life and providing an additional transportation choice for the public.

In coordination with statewide transportation investment strategies and stakeholders, DXE is pursuing rail connections from the High Desert Project terminus in Apple Valley, California to the Greater Los Angeles Basin area. To achieve this, DXE is exploring two additional and independent routes:

- 1) Building high-speed track south primarily within the existing I-15 corridor right of way from Apple Valley to Rancho Cucamonga, where a station would be constructed adjacent or connected to the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink train station (i.e. the Cajon Pass Project). The Cajon Pass Project will also consider construction of a regional service rail station within the I-15 median near the northern end of the Cajon Pass.
- 2) Constructing a high-speed rail line between Victorville and the Palmdale Metrolink station in conjunction with the proposed High Desert Corridor rail alignment (the “Palmdale Project”). (Caltrans does not have existing highway right of way in the Palmdale Project proposed rail alignment)

The Cajon Pass Project is anticipated to provide its own economic, safety, and environmental benefits. The parties believe that construction of the Cajon Pass Project will serve the important purposes of increasing passenger rail transportation within Southern California, including interconnectivity between systems, and promoting the region's mobility, safety, and air quality objectives. In pursuit of those goals and separate from and besides any agreements and discussions related to the Palmdale Project, the parties wish to enter this MOU to advance discussions related to the Cajon Pass Project.

Following this Notice of Intent process, the Memorandum of Understanding would be considered for signature by the parties. The terms of the contemplated Memorandum of Understanding are in Attachment A, **Memorandum of**

Understanding Related to the DesertXpress Enterprises High-Speed Rail Cajon Pass Project.

For media inquiries contact David Matza at David.Matza@dot.ca.gov or (909) 665-3029.

[Posted March 29, 2021]