CRCC

coast rail coordinating council

May 20, 2016

Malcolm Dougherty, Director
Department of Transportation
P.O. Box 942873, MS-49
Sacramento, CA 94273

Re: Proposition 1B deprogramming of the Coast Daylight Track and Signal Project ($25M)

Dear Director Dougherty:

We write on behalf of the Coast Rail Coordinating Council (CRCC), a coalition of coastal county transportation and planning agencies organized to improve passenger rail services. The primary focus of the CRCC is to improve the frequency, speed, reliability and ease of use of passenger trains on the coast route between San Francisco and Los Angeles.

We are disappointed at the recommended deprogramming proposed by Caltrans of $25 million from the Coast Daylight Service in the Proposition 1B Intercity Rail Program on the agenda for the California Transportation Commission on May 18-19th. We recognize the difficult funding times that exist this year, but this action jeopardizes the very viability of a Central Coast rail project that we have worked together on for years. While we understand that your goal is to keep near-term rail construction projects moving forward, this action does not support the State's emphasis on rail transportation and alternatives to driving throughout California.

We hereby request a formal commitment by Caltrans and the State Transportation Agency to <u>support, fund, negotiate with the railroad</u>, and work as a key partner with us on emerging rail services in the Coast Corridor.

The coastal counties have dedicated thousands of hours of staff time and the project has extensive policy support from elected officials, cities and counties for this statewide project. For over twenty years we have worked in good faith with Caltrans to plan and deliver coast corridor improvements, most recently including:

- **<u>Service Development Plan</u>** - Partnering in the federally required Service Development Plan for the Coast Corridor (May 2013)
- **<u>Environmental Impact Reports</u>** - Conducting Federal and State Environmental Impact Reports for the SLO-Salinas segment on behalf of Caltrans (December 2015), Salinas-San Jose (now underway)
- **<u>Amtrak Feasibility Study</u>** - Completing the Amtrak Feasibility Study documenting an estimated $3.1 million annual cost to serve the corridor with a 62% farebox ratio, adding over 124,000 new riders to an underserved corridor. (May 2016)

- **LOSSAN Business Plan** - Including future operation of a new coast corridor train in the LOSSAN Business Plan. (February 2016)

The delay in project implementation is a result of an ineffective and incoherent strategy to deal with Union Pacific Railroad. Clearly, this strategy has not produced results. Closing the gap in state-supported services along the Central Coast has been included in the State Rail Plan for over 20 years and is included in even the most conservative scenario for the 2018 Rail Plan. The market analysis done for the new Rail Plan shows a significant latent demand for rail on the Central Coast.

We understand that the CTC, CalSTA and Caltrans are facing a dire funding situation for transportation projects statewide and we appreciate the serious conundrum of cutting projects that have been in the plans for years if not decades. We believe that the STIP is misunderstood and underappreciated as a multimodal funding mechanism, as evidenced by the $31 million cut to rail projects proposed at this CTC meeting. We hope that the transportation proposals under consideration now will include a solution for the STIP crisis.

We also argue that the proposed elimination of $25 million to the Coast Daylight project is a question of geographic equity, as this was funding that this coalition has been counting on to implement improvements to the Coast Corridor, a historically underfunded region. This elimination will jeopardize all the success the corridor has achieved to date and put into question any improvements in the corridor for years to come. The Central Coast is facing a $50 million STIP cut. Adding another $25 million cut is a disproportionate cut to statewide funding coming to this region.

We request that Caltrans and CalSTA develop a near-term strategy to support, fund, and negotiate with the railroad to advance the goals of the coast corridor that include:

1. Providing a new state-supported through train to link the Central Coast to the Los Angeles basin and the San Francisco Bay Area;
2. Facilitating the extension of state-supported train service from San Jose to Salinas, and,
3. Providing better peak-hour service to Santa Barbara from the south on the LOSSAN corridor.

We were notified of this programming decision very late in the process. In the future we would appreciate advance notice of planned changes in funding or policy – good or bad—in order to allow the opportunity for discussion that is appropriate among public agencies.

We look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact us directly, or call Pete Rodgers at 805-781-5712.

Sincerely,

Dave Potter

Dave Potter
Chair, CRCC
Supervisor, Monterey County

Copy: Chad Edison, CalSTA
Coast Corridor Legislators
Susan Bransen, CTC
Bruce Roberts, Division of Rail and Mass Transit
Coast Corridor RTPA Executive Directors
CTC Commissioners

TAMC
TRANSPORTATION AGENCY
FOR MONTEREY COUNTY

55-B Plaza Circle, Salinas, CA 93901-2902 • Tel: (831) 775-0903 • Website: www.tamcmonterey.org

May 16, 2016

Mr. Bob Alvarado, Chair
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS-52
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Opposition to Proposition 1B deprogramming of the Coast Daylight Track and Signal Project ($25M)
California Transportation Commission on May 18-19, 2016 (Tab 58)

Dear Chair Alvarado:

We recently became aware of the deprogramming proposed by Caltrans of $25 million from the Coast Daylight Service in the Proposition 1B Intercity Rail Program on the agenda for the California Transportation Commission on May 18-19, 2016. **We request that the CTC deny Caltrans' request to deprogram Proposition 1B funds from the Coast Daylight project.**

This proposed programming decision was made without consulting with regional partners. This action jeopardizes several Central Coast rail projects that planning agencies and elected officials have worked on together for years. The project has been in the state rail plan for years. It is not clear how this deprogramming action supports the State's emphasis on rail transportation and alternatives to driving throughout California.

Our agency has prioritized rail improvements and rail projects enjoy strong support from the public and elected officials. We are deeply concerned that the proposed elimination of $25 million to the Coast Daylight project is a question of geographic equity, as this was funding that we had been counting on to implement improvements to the central coast, a historically underfunded region for rail services. This elimination will jeopardize all the success the corridor has achieved to date and put into question any improvements in the corridor for years to come. Monterey County is already facing a $16.1 million STIP cut. Adding another $25 million cut is a disproportionate cut to statewide funding coming to this region.

We look forward to your response. Please do not hesitate to contact me at 831-775-0903 or debbie@tamcmonterey.org or our consultant John Arriaga at (916) 669-1340 or jea@jeaandassociates.com.

Sincerely,

Debra L. Hale
Executive Director

Copy: Chad Edison, CalSTA
Coast Corridor Legislators
Bruce Roberts, Division of Rail and Mass Transit
Coast Corridor RTPA Executive Directors