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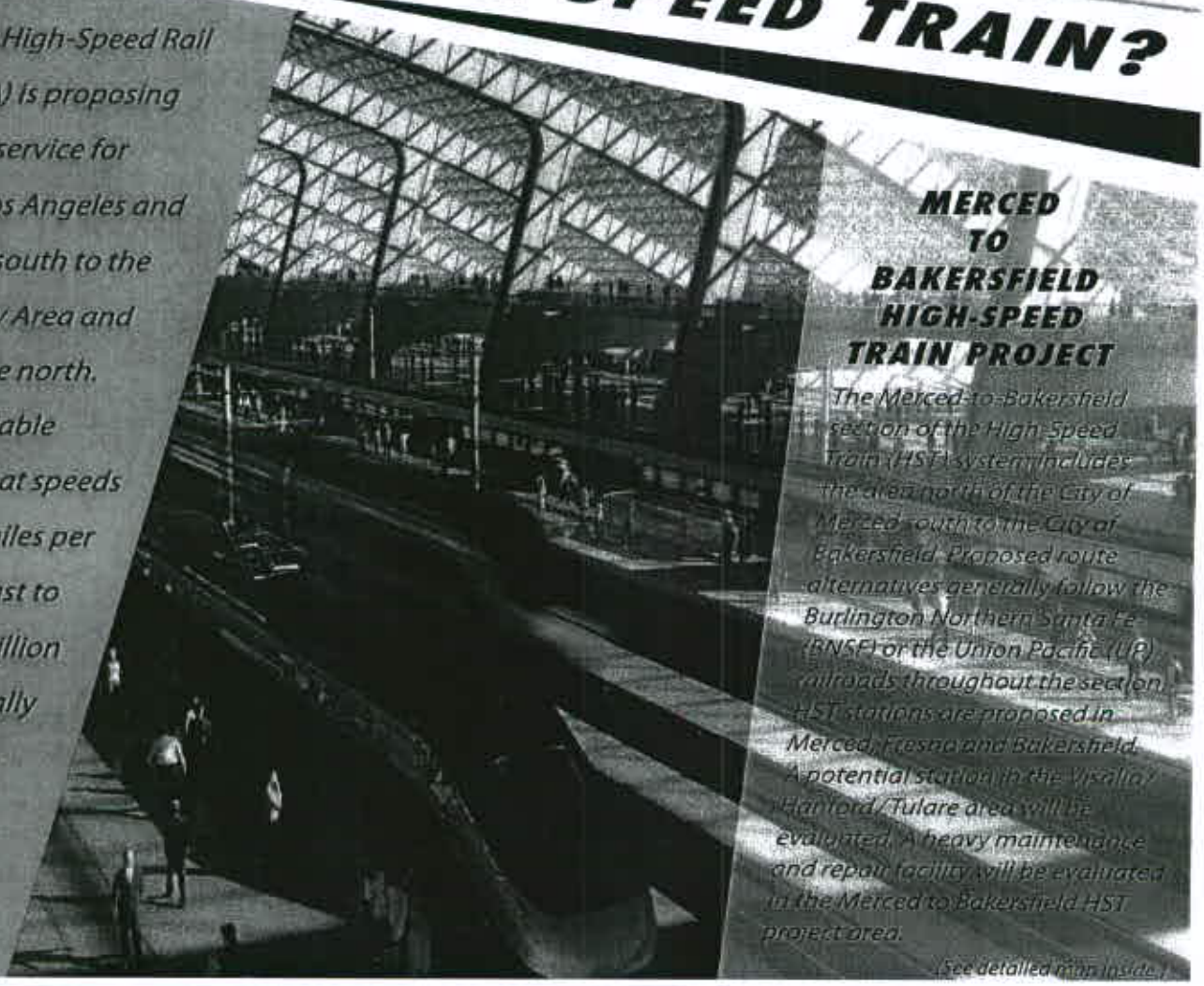
In November of 2008, the voters approved the bonding of $9.95 billion to be spent on the High Speed Train project in California. In addition, the federal American Recovery and Investment Act of 2009 included $8 billion for High Speed Rail. One of the likely first sections of the California high speed train project to be built is the Merced to Bakersfield section. This section, due to its geography and part of the system's backbone, would serve as the test track for the system to test trainsets at the 220 MPH high speeds. Planning for the new rail system is underway with the goal to be testing trains by 2015. The URS/ARUP/HMM team is working with staff from the City of Fresno, Fresno County, and Council of Fresno County Governments on the alignment and station in downtown Fresno.

Final Statewide Program Environmental Impact Reports and Environmental Impact Statements (EIR/EIS) for the High Speed Train project were completed in 2005 (for most of the 800-mile system) and most recently in July 2008 when the Pacheco Pass alignment was selected as the preferred alternative for the Bay Area to Central Valley section of the system. The California High Speed Rail Authority and the Federal Railroad Administration is now preparing a project EIR/EIS for the Merced to Bakersfield section. The URS/ARUP/HMM team is now embarking on the project-level environmental work to provide the more detailed level of analysis needed before construction can begin. There will be a scoping meeting at Fresno Exhibit Hall for the Environmental Impact Study/Report on March 25th, kicking off the environmental studies for the project. The presentation will update the Council on the project.

WHAT IS THE HIGH-SPEED TRAIN?

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) is proposing high-speed train service for travel between Los Angeles and San Diego in the south to the San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento in the north. This fast, safe, reliable system will travel at speeds in excess of 200 miles per hour and is forecast to carry up to 100 million passengers annually for the entire 800-mile high-speed train network by the year 2030.

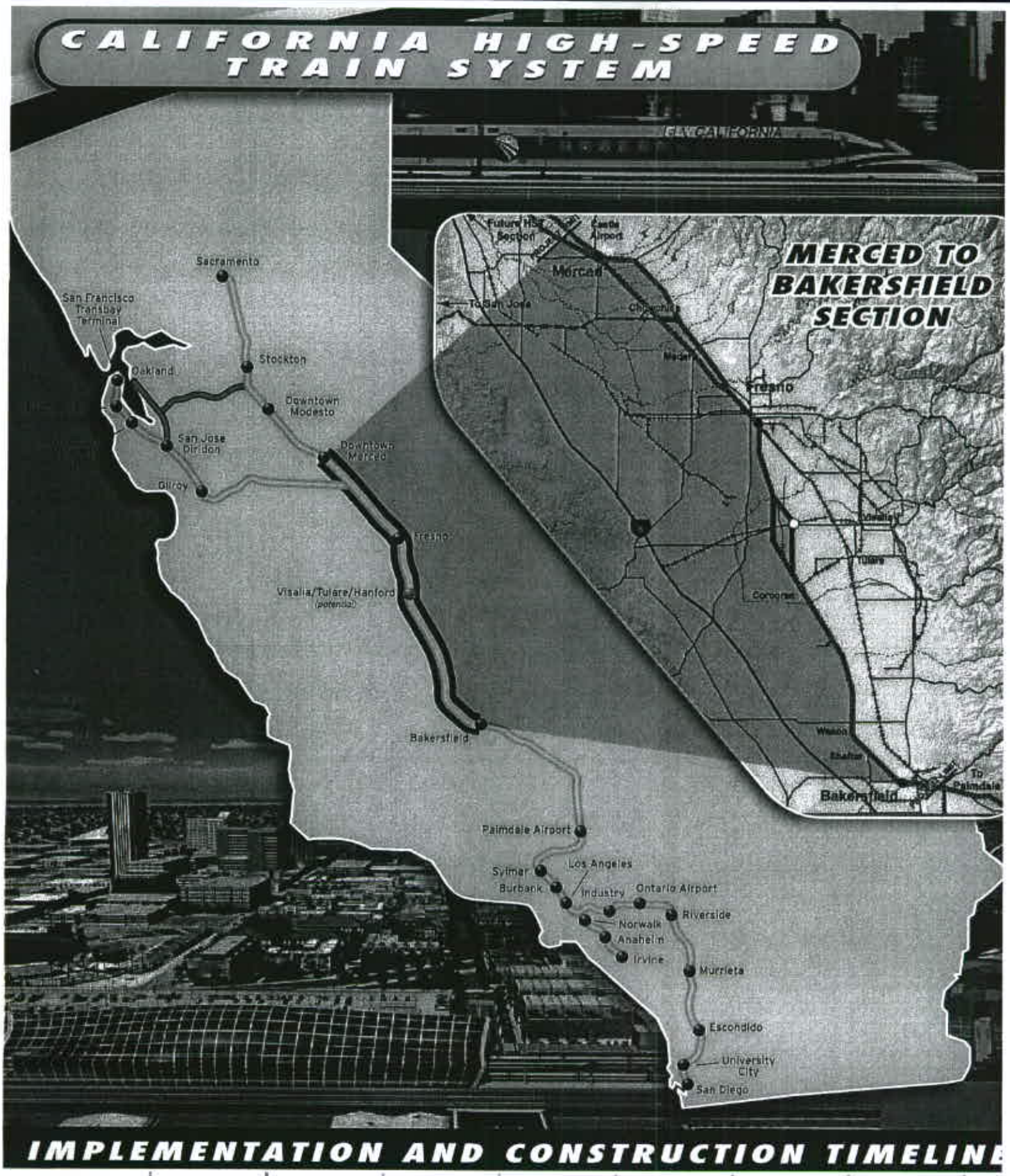


MERCED TO BAKERSFIELD HIGH-SPEED TRAIN PROJECT

The Merced-to-Bakersfield section of the High-Speed Train (HST) system includes the area north of the City of Merced south to the City of Bakersfield. Proposed route alternatives generally follow the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) or the Union Pacific (UP) railroads throughout the section. HST stations are proposed in Merced, Fresno and Bakersfield. A potential station in the Visalia/Hanford/Tulare area will be evaluated. A heavy maintenance and repair facility will be evaluated in the Merced to Bakersfield HST project area.

(See detailed map inside.)

CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN SYSTEM



IMPLEMENTATION AND CONSTRUCTION TIMELINE

PROGRAM-LEVEL EIR/EIS

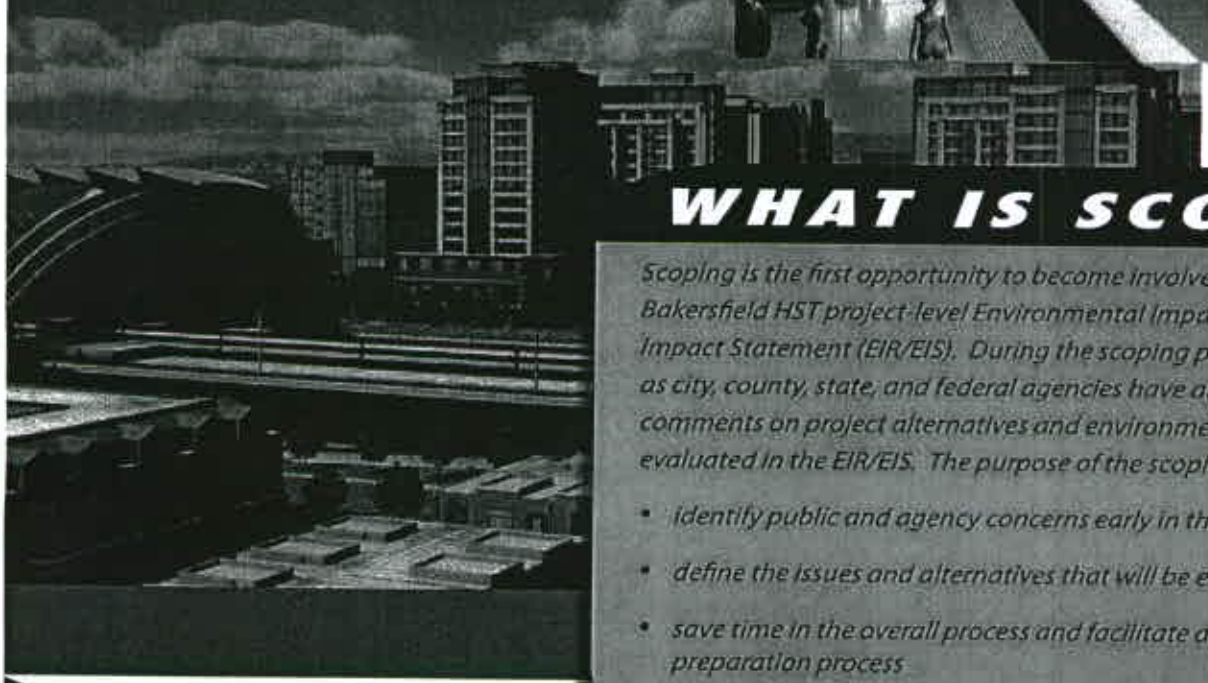
PROJECT SPECIFIC ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS, PRELIMINAR

2004 | 2005 | 2006 | 2007 | 2008 | 2009 | 2010 | 2011

ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS

California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) and the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) initiated the project-level environmental review process in the high speed rail section between Merced and Bakersfield.

Thus, in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the Authority has issued a Notice of Preparation (NOP) and has Respublished a Notice of Intent (NOI) for the preparation of a Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for the Initial Phase of the environmental process. Public scoping meeting will be hosted to receive public comment on the alternatives and issues that should be examined as part of the environmental analysis. Your comments will be considered in the preparation of the environmental document and will become part of the public record.



WHAT IS SCOPING?

Scoping is the first opportunity to become involved in the Merced-to-Bakersfield HST project-level Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS). During the scoping process the public, as well as city, county, state, and federal agencies have an opportunity to provide comments on project alternatives and environmental impacts to be evaluated in the EIR/EIS. The purpose of the scoping process is to:

- *identify public and agency concerns early in the environmental process*
- *define the issues and alternatives that will be examined in the EIR/EIS*
- *save time in the overall process and facilitate an efficient EIR/EIS preparation process*

FINAL DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION

2 | 2013 | 2014 | 2015 | 2016 | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2

COME PARTICIPATE IN THE HIGH-SPEED TRAIN PROJECT!

The California High Speed Rail Authority will host public scoping meetings along the project section to provide the public with an opportunity to learn about the project, ask questions and provide feedback about what route alternatives and environmental issues should be evaluated in the EIR/EIS. Please join us for one of the following Open House sessions.

Wednesday, March 18, 2009
3:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Merced Community Senior Center
755 W. 15th St
Merced, CA

Thursday, March 19, 2009
3:00 – 7:00 p.m.
Madera County Fairgrounds
Home Arts Building
1850 West Cleveland Ave.
Madera, CA

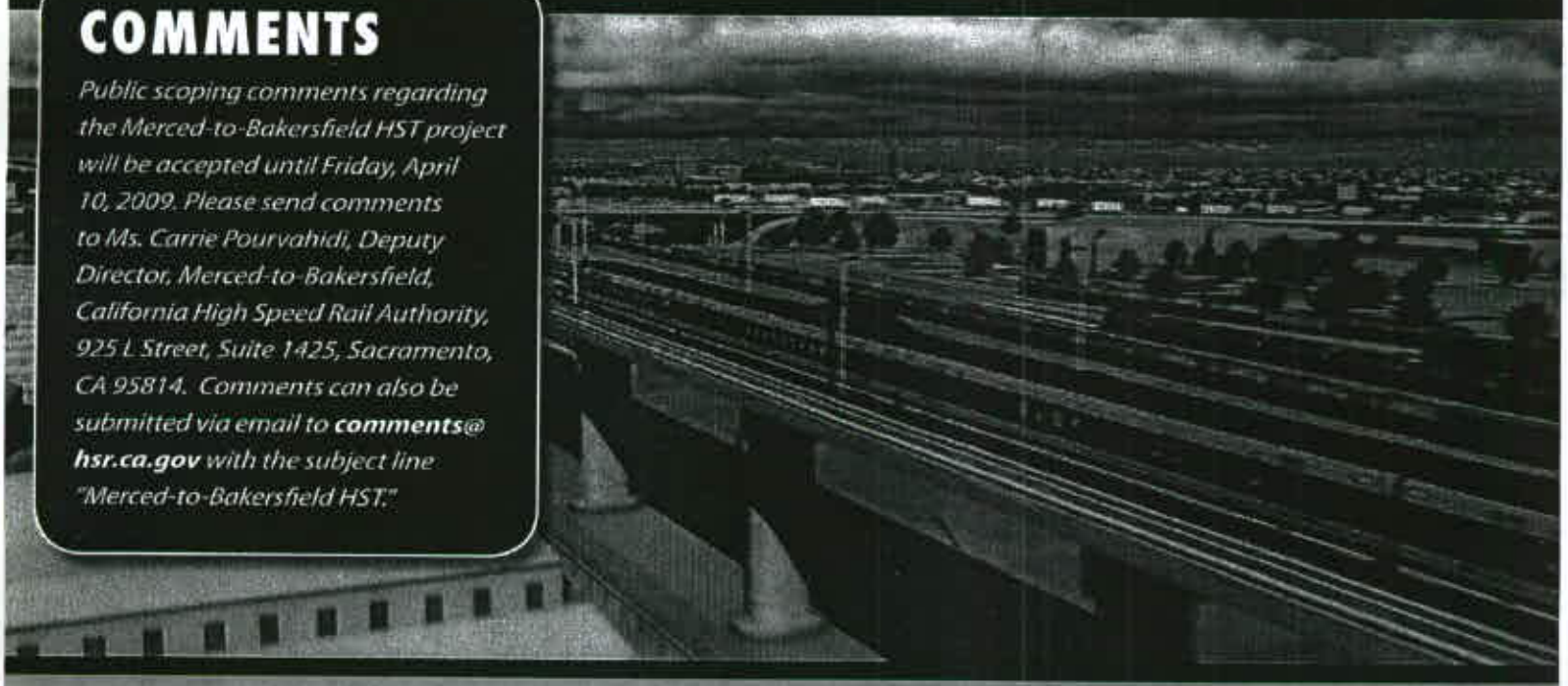
Tuesday, March 24, 2009
3:00 - 7:00 p.,m.
Visalia Convention Center
303 E Acequia Avenue
Visalia, CA

Wednesday, March 25, 2009
3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Fresno Convention Center (Exhibit Hall)
848 M Street
Fresno, CA

Thursday, March 26, 2009
3:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Rabobank Theater (Lobby)
1001 Truxtun Ave.
Bakersfield, CA

COMMENTS

Public scoping comments regarding the Merced-to-Bakersfield HST project will be accepted until Friday, April 10, 2009. Please send comments to Ms. Carrie Pourvahidi, Deputy Director, Merced-to-Bakersfield, California High Speed Rail Authority, 925 L Street, Suite 1425, Sacramento, CA 95814. Comments can also be submitted via email to ***comments@hsr.ca.gov*** *with the subject line "Merced-to-Bakersfield HST."*



CALIFORNIA HIGH SPEED TRAIN PROJECT WILL:

- *Be built on dedicated right-of-way, safely separated from cars and trucks, pedestrians and other rail traffic*
- *Use only a fraction of the energy of automobiles and airplanes*
- *Help free California from dependence on fossil fuels and reduce greenhouse gases that cause global warming.*
- *Reduce traffic – the statewide system will remove over 50 million auto trips per year*
- *Enhance the economy – as many as 450,000 jobs will be created, including jobs at the maintenance facility to be located in the Central Valley*
- *Improve the environment – the energy efficient, high-speed trains will provide a transportation alternative that will help reduce air pollution.*
- *Provide better connections – provides a safer, time and cost efficient alternative to automobiles and will help relieve overcrowding at major airports*

For more information visit www.cahighspeedrail.ca.gov