

California State Senate



Senator

**S. Joseph Simitian**  
ELEVENTH SENATE DISTRICT

California State Assembly



Assemblyman

**Richard S. Gordon**  
TWENTY-FIRST ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

July 25, 2011

Will Kempton, Chair  
California High-Speed Rail Peer Review Group  
550 S. Main St.  
Orange, CA 92863-1584

Dear Mr. Kempton:

We read with interest the recent report, dated July 1, prepared by the High-Speed Rail Peer Review Group in reaction to the Legislative Analyst's Office May 11 critique of the HSR project ("High-Speed Rail Is at a Critical Juncture"). All of us who want to see the state's High-Speed Rail project succeed appreciate the effort and expertise that you and the other members of the Peer Review Group put into this document and all of your work, and we thank you for your service to the State.

We were gratified to see the Peer Review Group advocate in the July 1 report for an approach to development of the high-speed rail system on the San Francisco to San Jose and L.A. to Anaheim segments that "would both save money and ... reduce local opposition" to the project in those areas. You correctly note that such an approach would "provide the starting capacity for the initial years of operation and would provide much stronger support for the future investment program once initial HSR demand has been demonstrated."

As you may be aware, we, along with Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, have recently outlined just such an approach for the South Bay and the San Francisco Peninsula, where the HSR project will be constructed within the rail corridor that is now home to Caltrain regional rail service. In April we proposed a path forward for High-Speed Rail on the Peninsula that would create a blended system that integrates HSR and a 21<sup>st</sup>-century Caltrain, providing sufficient capacity to meet reasonably foreseeable HSR demand while addressing the most problematic aspects of the project as it has been proposed between San Francisco and San Jose.

Our proposal (which is attached) has three key elements:

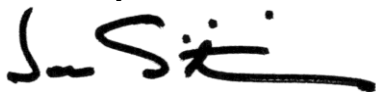
- 1) Keep this blended system within the existing Caltrain right-of-way to minimize impacts on the homes and businesses adjacent to the corridor.
- 2) Remove elevated structures from the project plan, except in those cases where a community expresses a clear preference for an elevated design.
- 3) Limit the EIR currently under preparation to a more modest system that responds to the first two elements and does not include further "phases."

We write to request that the Peer Review Group bring your collective expertise to bear on our proposal. We would like you know if the proposal meets your criteria for a smart, balanced approach to construction of the HSR project on the San Jose to San Francisco segment. We welcome your comments about the implications of our proposal not only for the South Bay/Peninsula segment but also for the overall, state-wide HSR project.

High-Speed Rail may well be the most significant public works project currently underway in California. Its ultimate disposition will affect the future of our transportation system, our state budget, and quite possibly Californians' belief in the ability of government to solve problems and pursue worthy ends. We appreciate the work that the Peer Review Group has contributed to this endeavor, and the opportunity to communicate with you about it.

We look forward to your reply. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we can provide any additional information that would facilitate your response. Thank you.

Sincerely,



State Senator S. Joseph Simitian  
Chair, Senate Budget Subcommittee #2  
on Resources, Environmental Protection,  
Energy and Transportation



Assemblymember Richard S. Gordon  
Chair, Assembly Budget Subcommittee #3  
on Resources and Transportation