

High Desert Corridor  
Joint Powers Authority

May 3, 2017

Meeting Materials

Item 3

Correspondence



# High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority



April 5, 2017

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary  
U.S. Department of Transportation  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20500

Gary Cohn, Director  
United States National Economic Council  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Re: XpressWest High Speed Rail Service

Dear President Trump, Secretary Chao and Director Cohn:

I am writing on behalf of the High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority (HDCJPA), which is working together with our partners, the XpressWest High Speed Rail Project, LA Metrolink and the State of California, to develop a high speed rail project that will connect Las Vegas, Nevada to Southern California via high-speed passenger rail.

The HDCJPA is a joint powers authority created under California law, and is comprised of the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino County and the five municipalities along the right-of-way. The LA/Anaheim to Las Vegas HSR project would include the HDC right-of-way from Victorville to Palmdale, California that is part of a multi-purpose corridor being developed by the HDCJPA.

The Southern California to Las Vegas Project would continue to promote California's commitment to provide alternatives to transportation mobility, enhanced safety for its residents, and improve air quality in the region, as well as advancing manufacturing and

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tourism from Anaheim to Los Angeles to Las Vegas. In addition, this project will not only create construction related jobs, but also be a stimulus to the economic growth of both the Los Angeles and Las Vegas metropolitan areas as a result of bringing the two major metropolitan area within two and a half hours of each other via high speed rail.

The recent release by the HDCJPA of an “investment-grade” ridership and revenue study has revealed a huge demand for high speed rail service between Southern California and Las Vegas. The study validates the Southern California–Las Vegas corridor as one of the best investments for high speed rail in the country. It has all of the characteristics the Trump administration is seeking to maximize private sector involvement in re-building America’s infrastructure.

The forecast estimates that approximately 27% of the travelers from Southern California to Las Vegas would conduct their travel via HSR. This amounts to a projected 11 million roundtrips annually when the system is completed, and 14 million roundtrips by 2050, comparable to those enjoyed by the celebrated high speed rail lines in Europe as well as the Northeast Corridor in the United States. This demand for HSR combined with the fares competitive to other travel options, could generate over \$1 billion per year in operating revenue when the system is fully operational in 2035. This also suggests there is likely to be strong private sector interest in investing in the development of the corridor, and that operations would not require any public subsidy.

California’s economy is heavily dependent on tourism, which is derived in large part from Southern Nevada. Approximately 23 million persons travel between Southern California and Southern Nevada each year. Today, Interstate 15, which is the primary corridor connecting the two regions, is so heavily congested that it actually deters individuals from travelling between the two regions. In addition, the volume of passenger vehicles severely restricts goods movement from the Los Angeles basin. This significant burden on commerce for the Southwest United States is one that can be remedied by the high speed rail project.

Beyond the benefits to our economy from increased tourism and significant job creation, XpressWest lays the foundation for this Nation’s commitment to modernizing transportation infrastructure in an environmentally-friendly way. The greenhouse gas emissions that would be reduced by lowering traffic between the two regions is substantial, particularly in light of expected population increases over the coming decades. Implementation of XpressWest is a significant step toward achieving a national smart transportation infrastructure and would serve as a model for the rest of our Nation to follow.

To date, the initial segment of the corridor from Las Vegas to Victorville, California has been developed and funded by XpressWest completely by the private sector and XpressWest. The Victorville to Palmdale HDC right-of-way has received a commitment from LA Metro out of voter-approved Measure M funds to support right-of-way acquisition and construction.

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For a project of this significance and size to succeed, the support of the federal government will also be essential. This would include credit assistance through existing loan programs of the Department of Transportation. In addition, this project could serve as a strong demonstration of the value of tax-credit-enhanced equity and other federal infrastructure programs planned by this Administration.

On behalf of the High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority, I respectfully request you and the Department of Transportation to engage in all possible ways to support this critical infrastructure project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Robert A. Lovingood". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "R" and "L".

Robert A. Lovingood, Chairman  
High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Authority

cc: XpressWest