



May 3, 2006

Honorable Speaker Nunez,

Today California is faced with four daunting challenges: an inadequate transportation infrastructure, growing sprawl that is over burdening local and state supplied infrastructure and services, the need to reduce CO2 emissions to moderate the negative impacts of Global Warming, and continuing structural deficits that limit the states ability to invest. There is no one "silver bullet" policy or program to completely solve these problems. There are however series of policies and programs large and small that can improve the situation for several of the areas at the same time. The proposed program that will have the largest single impact on all of these is the building of the statewide high-speed rail network.

The high speed rail network will:

- Relieve congestion by carrying over ten million commuters, reducing congestion on key corridors,
- Reduce congestion on I-5 and 99 and at airports by carrying over 32 million inter-regional travelers,
- Assist local efforts at smart growth and economic development by promoting economic revitalization and transit-oriented development around downtown stations throughout the state,
- Save hundreds of lives a year from reduced traffic fatalities,
- Reduce gas house gas emissions by over 4.4 billion pounds a year as travelers switch from driving or flying,
- Greatly improve and expand our existing and planned commuter rail lines across the state,
- Save the state billions of dollars because it costs two thirds less than equivalent highway & airport expansions.

Rome was not built in a day nor were the California water and highway networks. Neither will the California high speed rail network. Now however is the time to start investing incrementally upgrading our existing rail infrastructure and services to relieve current bottlenecks and accommodate the high speed network in the future. By investing one to two billion dollars now in upgrades to existing rail services in the Bay Area, Southland, and the 99 corridor commuters can see immediate results in improved travel choices. At the same time acquiring the vital "missing links" of right of way now will ensure that future rail upgrades in the Bay Area, Southland, and the 99 corridor will not be blocked by a new shopping mall or subdivision on a critical piece of right of way.

The economic and environmental benefits of a statewide high speed rail network are too important to risk losing through inaction. By investing a small amount now commuters can gain immediate benefits from improved services while California's long term opportunity for such a network is secured.

Daniel Krause
Executive Director
Californians for High Speed Rail