



Testimony of Jim Hartnett, Executive Director of Caltrain
Field Hearing of Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines, and Hazardous Materials
"Continued Oversight of the California High-Speed Rail"
August 29, 2016

Good morning. Thank you for your attention to this issue and for inviting us to share a local perspective. I'm Jim Harnett. I'm the Executive Director of the Caltrain commuter rail system and the CEO of the San Mateo County Transit District. I'm also a past member of the California High Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors and a former Mayor of Redwood City.

When voters approved Prop 1A in 2008 it wasn't just about connecting the state with high-speed rail, it was also about improving transportation connectivity on existing systems. The measure included significant resources dedicated to upgrading local transportation services to feed the statewide network and to improving mobility options for surrounding communities.

Large-scale, visionary projects like HSR can and should be planned and delivered in a way that prioritizes investments in local improvements, while also making incremental, but significant progress toward the long-term vision.

During my time on the HSR Board, I worked with my colleagues to ensure that this approach would be embraced. The product of those efforts was SB 1029, which appropriated funding for HSR construction in the Central Valley, but also directed over \$1 billion for local and regional improvements on the "bookends" in southern California and the Bay Area.

In our case, this State funding is being used to leverage over \$1 billion in local, regional and federal funds to upgrade the Caltrain corridor and allow us to deliver more service at a time when our communities need it most.

Caltrain is struggling to accommodate unprecedented regional growth. 2016 marked our sixth consecutive year of record-setting ridership. As Hwy 101 and 280 have become more and more congested, employers have turned to Caltrain as the preferred commute option between San Francisco and Silicon Valley. As a result, our peak hour service is well over 100 percent capacity with ridership on some trains exceeding 125 percent of available seats.

The Caltrain corridor, is arguably the most economically productive area in the State. The communities served by our 51-mile railroad are responsible for 14 percent of the State's GDP, 20 percent of CA tax revenue and are the birthplace of over half of California patents.

However, the region cannot continue to thrive without equipping the 150-year-old rail corridor with a modernized transit system capable of accommodating current and future ridership demand.

Fortunately, with local, state and federal help, Caltrain has been able to advance the Caltrain Modernization Program. The centerpiece of this program is the transformation of the corridor from its

current diesel operations to a system that features high-performance electric trains capable of delivering cleaner, faster, more frequent service to Peninsula communities.

When complete, electrification of Caltrain will be able to serve more riders at more stations. As a result 619,000 vehicle miles traveled will be eliminated every day and the system's emissions will be reduced by 97 percent, eliminating over 176,000 tons of CO2 annually.

Caltrain and HSR have worked with several local, regional and federal partners to secure funding for the Caltrain Modernization Program as an early investment in the high-speed rail system. Six Bay Area funding partners have agreed to commit significant local funds in order to leverage over \$700 million in HSR funding and these investments have positioned the project to receive almost \$650 million in Federal Transit Administration discretionary grant funds.

Thanks to these commitments, Caltrain was able to authorize contractors to begin design work on the project. The next steps will be construction of the project and the procurement of electric trains; work that will create over \$2.5 billion in economic value, including almost 10,000 new jobs during construction.

Meanwhile, we are also collaborating with the High-Speed Rail Authority as it begins the environmental process for additional improvements that will be needed to equip the corridor to accommodate HSR service. When HSR is extended north of San Jose, Caltrain and HSR will share the corridor and operate on a blended system to San Francisco. The planning and design of these improvements will be carefully considered to ensure that impacts on surrounding neighborhoods are minimized and benefits are realized.

Thank you.