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January __, 2024

Mr. Robert Phipps
Interim Executive Director
Fresno Council of Governments
2035 Tulare Street, Suite 201
Fresno, CA 93721

Subject: Support for the Fresno County Regional Rail Feasibility Study Grant Application

Dear Mr. Phipps,

The City of Kerman strongly supports the application by the Fresno Council of Governments (Fresno COG), in partnership with the Fresno County Rural Transit Agency (FCRTA), to the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) FY2024-25 Sustainable Communities competitive grant program for the Fresno County Regional Rail Feasibility Study (Study).

The City of Kerman understands the Study will analyze the feasibility of a zero-emission regional rail network in Fresno County that aims to better connect the County's disadvantaged and underserved rural incorporated and unincorporated communities to the future downtown Fresno High-Speed Rail Station.

The Study aligns with the Caltrans Sustainable Communities grant program criteria by studying a zero-emission regional rail network that could result in increased public transit ridership throughout Fresno County, achieve the State's vehicle miles traveled (VMT) and greenhouse gas (GHG) reduction targets, and benefit a federally designated Area of Persistent Poverty, Historically Disadvantaged Community, and Opportunity Zone, as well as a state designated Disadvantaged Community, Economically Distressed Area, and Low-Income Community. The Study would primarily focus on studying a zero-emission regional rail network on the existing, and currently underutilized, San Joaquin Valley Railroad corridor that runs east-west within Fresno County.

Fresno COG and FCRTA are requesting \$300,000 in grant funding for the Fresno County Regional Rail Feasibility Study. Fresno COG and FCRTA would also contribute a combined \$50,000 in local matching funds towards the Study.

The City of Kerman would like to thank Caltrans for its consideration and welcomes the opportunity to support Fresno COG and FCRTA in the pursuit of this Study.

Sincerely,

Maria Pacheco, Mayor

cc: City Council
City Manager

"COMMUNITY COMES FIRST"