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February 13, 2023

The Honorable Pete Buttigieg
Secretary
U.S. Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington, DC 20590

Re: North Lathrop Transfer Station and Lathrop Wye Project RAISE Grant Application

Honorable Secretary Buttigieg:

The Madera County Transportation Commission (MCTC) strongly supports the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's (SJRRRC) application for \$25 million from USDOT's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program to implement the North Lathrop Transfer Station and Lathrop Wye Project ('the Project'). RAISE funding would be matched with state funds already secured by SJRRRC to complete this project.

The Project is a key component to the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission's (SJRRRC) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's (SJJPA) Valley Rail Expansion Program, an ambitious expansion of commuter and intercity rail services in the Northern California Megaregion. The transfer station will enable transfers between three northbound Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) trains (Merced to Natomas) and three southbound trains (Stockton/Natomas to San Jose). This allows for all 4 trains from the Merced Extension to carry passengers going to the Tri-Valley and Silicon Valley which provides for a significant portion of the extension's ridership.

Valley Rail improves geographic equity by connecting key locations in the Central Valley including Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, and Fresno Counties to each other and beyond to the Bay Area and the greater California rail network via three future high-speed rail (HSR) connections in Madera, Merced, and San Jose. This transformative, megaregional project helps further the State's vision for an integrated rail network and provides direct mobility and air quality benefits to citizens in nine counties, including over 30% of the disadvantaged communities in California.

Member Agencies: County of Madera, City of Madera, City of Chowchilla

The Project will comprise the construction of a new station facility including station track, a new ACE center platform, bus transfer center, and other multimodal features such as bike and pedestrian access facilities. Furthermore, the Project's double tracking of the Lathrop Wye will enable the more efficient movement of both passenger and freight traffic. Additionally, the station is planned to serve as a multi-modal transfer station between ACE and the proposed Valley Link project, a new passenger rail connection to the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) system.

The Project's delivery and operation will result in significant and diversified economic impacts and benefits. It will provide enhanced commuter and intercity passenger rail and transit access and connectivity in the San Joaquin Valley and provide new passenger rail services to areas with no service or where very limited service currently exists. Enhancing mobility through the provision of transportation alternatives to auto travel will alleviate recurring congestion on the regional highways and interstates while also lowering emissions. Consistent with long-term state, regional, and local planning objectives, the development of the North Lathrop station will encourage transit-oriented development near the North Lathrop station and will provide the opportunity to connect regional transit with future high-speed rail service in Merced.

The MCTC urges the Department to approve SJRRC's RAISE Grant application for the North Lathrop Transfer Station and Lathrop Wye Project. Thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'PTaylor', written in a cursive style.

Patricia Taylor
Executive Director
Madera County Transportation Commission