



Administrator Amit Bose  
Federal Railroad Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington DC, 20590

April 13, 2023

**RE: Support for San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority FY 22-23 Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail (Fed-State Partnership) Grant**

Dear Administrator Bose:

On behalf of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council, please accept this letter of support for the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority's (SJJPA) FY 22-23 Fed-State Partnership grant for the North Central Valley Rail Capacity Enhancement Project. The project proposes an ambitious suite of proposed corridor-based capacity improvements that will enable the expansion of state-supported intercity passenger rail services and enhanced freight rail velocity and efficiency, which is especially important to the vital agricultural sector in the corridor.

The North Central Valley (Escalon – Fresno) Rail Capacity Enhancement Project is located along a key 100-mile shared-use rail corridor owned by BNSF Railway (BNSF) in California's Central Valley. The Project Area includes the BNSF Stockton Subdivision between Escalon (BNSF Milepost 1099) and Fresno (BNSF Milepost 998). This segment is a critical feeder to BNSF's Southern Transcontinental route and hosts high volumes of BNSF freight trains and the *San Joaquins* intercity passenger trains of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA) operated by Amtrak between Oakland/Sacramento, Fresno, and Bakersfield. The project would invest in double tracking, new or improved bridge and highway-rail grade crossings and allow for accommodation of additional *San Joaquins* intercity passenger rail trains.

Communities along the corridor will experience health and environmental benefits from improved air quality due to reduced train idling, and fewer idling vehicles at grade crossings. Air quality remains a leading concern in the Central Valley and multi-modal freight and passenger rail investments represent a prime opportunity to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The project would also promote community connectivity, accessibility, and safety by removing railway-highway grade crossings that have often been a historic source of community dividing infrastructure and present safety challenges for vehicles and pedestrians.

SJJPA is seeking \$75 million in Fed-State Partnership funding and has received \$18 million in state matching funds for this project. We urge you to support these critical infrastructure investments in our region.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Poythress".

Robert Poythress  
Chair of the San Joaquin Valley Regional Planning Agencies Policy Council  
Madera County Supervisor

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