

San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority FAQs

(May 22, 2013)

The San Joaquin intercity rail service has the 5th highest ridership in the nation and has high on-time performance, with ridership increasing why do we need a JPA?

Response:

The San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service is a successful service with increasing ridership. The sponsors and supporters of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority believe that under regional governance/management, there will be a stronger partnership with the state and the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service will become even more successful.

In 1996, the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) was created to oversee the administration of the Capitol Corridor service under the provisions of Senate Bill 457 (SB 457). Over the last 15 years, without direct financial contribution by member agencies, the CCJPA has successfully managed the Capitol Corridor between Auburn and San Jose. Capital investments, cooperation with the Union Pacific freight railroad, and state support have allowed for dramatic increases in the frequency of service (increases of 400 percent between Sacramento and Oakland), and the Capitol Corridor intercity passenger rail service has the highest on-time performance in the nation for intercity service.

In addition to more cost effective administration and operations, the CCJPA model has shown that there are several other potential benefits to regional governance/management of intercity passenger service including:

- The ability to have a stronger voice in advocating for service improvements and expansions
- Local decision-making that is more responsive and adaptive to passenger issues
- The ability to take better advantage of joint marketing and partnerships with local agencies
- More engagement by local communities to support the service

Caltrans Division of Rail would continue to have prominent and important roles with the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service even after the administration responsibility is turned over to the San Joaquin JPA. In addition to the state continuing to provide the funding necessary for service operations, administration and marketing, Caltrans Division of Rail would continue to be responsible for the development of the Statewide Rail Plan, coordination and integration between the three state-supported intercity passenger rail services, grant applications to the federal government, and developing state budget requests – like they have been for the Capitol Corridor under the CCJPA.

Will the San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail Service continue to require a state subsidy?

Response:

Yes. All conventional intercity rail services in this country require operational subsidies. The San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service is expected to continue to depend on state funds to subsidize its operations. Today, the San Joaquin farebox ratio is at about 55%, which is high for public transportation. The San Joaquin Service provides great benefits to California. **Its 1.1 million annual riders reduce automobile vehicle miles traveled in the San Joaquin Corridor by well over 100 million miles every year.** This reduces congestion

on California's heavily congested freeways and helps improve air quality. In addition, intercity rail helps support California's sustainability goals, helping reduce automobile dependency and promoting transit-oriented development and transit use.

Working with the state, the Capitol Corridor JPA has managed to increase service on the Capitol Corridor dramatically without local or regional funding. Shortfalls have not occurred over the last 15 years with the Capitol Corridor under the administration of the CCJPA.

Will Amtrak still operate the San Joaquin Intercity Rail Service?

Yes. Amtrak is the operator, and will continue to be the operator for all three state-supported services: the San Joaquin, the Capitol Corridor, and the Pacific Surfliner. The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority looks forward to a successful partnership with Amtrak and Caltrans like has been established with the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority.

Is a new San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority premature, especially as California is undertaking a major high-speed rail planning and implementation project?

Response:

The San Joaquin trains are a vital passenger rail service in the Valley that needs support and expansion now. An improved and expanded San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service will provide a critical transportation option with or without a state-wide high speed rail service. If the high speed rail program goes forward, CHSRA proposes to potentially move some existing San Joaquin service and/or operate new intercity express trains in the first construction segment until such time as the first true high speed trains go into operation. In other regions, JPA's have been an effective framework for ensuring that high speed rail infrastructure and services are compatible with the desires of the local communities. Moreover, AB 1779 is permissive – not mandatory. In the end, if the region or the state views the JPA as premature, for whatever reason, the parties will not approve any transfer agreement.

What if additional capacity of the railroads operating within the San Joaquin corridor does not materialize, making it difficult to achieve additional rail passenger services?

Response:

Over the years, there has been a very modest increase in frequency of service on the San Joaquin line. Since 1993, the number of round trips between the Bay Area and the Central Valley has remained the same at four daily round-trips. An additional daily round trip between Sacramento and Bakersfield was added in 1998 and another in 2001. Additional service has not materialized for the San Joaquin service, suggesting that it has been difficult to achieve additional rail passenger service in this corridor.

The model of the Capitol Corridor with the JPA has worked very well, and has resulted in great increases in frequency for that corridor. The difficulties in achieving additional passenger rail service in the San Joaquin

Corridor are actually an argument for having a JPA be responsible for administering the San Joaquin service, considering this structure has worked so well with the Capitol Corridor.

Strong local and regional support is needed to get improved service in the San Joaquin corridor. The JPA is an effective structure to get strong local and regional support needed to achieve increased frequencies in this corridor.

Isn't this just another layer of government?

Response

No. For direct service delivery, a regional JPA would provide decision-making closer to the customers and the operations and more cost-effective administration of the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service.

Who supports AB 1779?

Response:

AB 1779 is sponsored by the Central Valley Rail Working Group, the San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council, Sacramento Regional Transit, and the San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission. To date, the following entities have submitted formal letters of support for AB 1779:

- Central Valley Rail Working Group (*sponsor*)
- San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council (*sponsor*)
- Sacramento Regional Transit (*sponsor*)
- San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (*sponsor*)
- California Partnership for the San Joaquin Valley
- San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District
- California Central Valley Economic Development Corporation
- California Transit Association
- Sacramento Area Council of Governments
- San Joaquin Council of Governments
- Stanislaus Council of Governments
- Madera County Transportation Commission
- Merced County Association of Governments
- Tulare County Association of Governments
- Contra Costa Transportation Authority
- Fresno Council of Governments
- Fresno County
- Contra Costa County Board of Supervisors
- Mayor of Fresno
- Steve Cohn, Sacramento City Council, CCJPA Board member, SACOG Board Member, and Sacramento RT Board Member
- City of Modesto
- City of Merced
- City of Lodi

- City of Elk Grove
- City of Turlock
- City of Sacramento
- City of Stockton
- City of Visalia
- City of Selma
- City of Mendota
- City of Fowler
- City of Kingsburg
- City of Huron
- City of Corcoran
- City of Tracy
- City of Manteca
- Fresno Regional Workforce Investment Board
- Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce
- Greater Fresno Chamber of Commerce
- Sacramento Metro Chamber of Commerce
- San Joaquin Partnership
- San Joaquin Regional Transit District
- Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority
- Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo Rail Corridor Agency

Central Valley Rail Working Group Member Agencies are: Sacramento Regional Transit District, Sacramento Area Council of Governments, City of Sacramento, City of Elk Grove, City of Galt, County of Sacramento, San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission, San Joaquin Council of Governments, San Joaquin Regional Transit District, City of Stockton, City of Manteca, City of Lodi, County of San Joaquin, Stanislaus Council of Governments, City of Turlock, City of Modesto, County of Stanislaus, Merced County Association of Governments, City of Merced, and County of Merced.

San Joaquin Valley Regional Policy Council Member Agencies are: Fresno Council of Governments, Kern Council of Governments, Kings County Association of Governments, Madera County Transportation Commission, Merced County Association of Governments, San Joaquin Council of Governments, Stanislaus Council of Governments, Tulare County Association of Governments, and San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District.

Does the San Joaquin JPA have bi-partisan support?

Response:

Yes. Assemblymember Olsen and Senator Cannella joined on as co-authors of AB 1779 (the enabling legislation for the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority) in addition to Assemblymembers Perea, and Dickinson, and Senators Wolk and Padilla. On May 30, AB 1779 passed on the Assembly Floor with a bi-partisan 64-11 vote and on August 29, AB 1779 passed on the Senate Floor with a bi-partisan 31-3 vote. On August 30, AB 1779 passed Assembly Concurrence with a bi-partisan 62-16 vote. In addition, the long list of agencies and organizations throughout the Central Valley supporting AB 1779 is bi-partisan.

What are the main provisions of AB 1779?

Response:

Assembly Bill 1779 will enable the transfer of administrative responsibility of the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service from the Department of Transportation to a new joint powers authority. Following the model of the CCJPA, AB 1779 is permissive legislation which would enable regional governance/management of the existing San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service between Bakersfield-Fresno-Stockton-Sacramento-Oakland.

AB 1779 defines the composition of the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJJPA), and extends the time for creating the SJJPA and executing an interagency transfer agreement with the Department of Transportation to June 30, 2015. The earliest regional governance/management of the San Joaquin rail service can be transferred to the SJJPA is June 30, 2014. AB 1779 ensures that for not less than a three-year period, the level of state funding for intercity rail service in the San Joaquin corridor shall be maintained at least to the level of service in the corridor at the time of the transfer, providing fiscal stability that will allow appropriate planning and operation of these services. In order to transfer responsibility of the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service to the SJJPA, AB 1779 requires that the transfer must result in administrative or operating cost reductions. Finally, AB 1779 enables local resources to be used to expand San Joaquin service or to offset and redirection, elimination, reduction, or reclassification of state resources for operating the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service as determined by local agencies.

Does the CHSRA support the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority?

Response:

The CHSRA has no formal position on the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority.

The new San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority is not directly related to the statewide high-speed rail project. Supporters of AB 1779 include both supporters and opponents of the proposed statewide high-speed train project.

The San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority promotes improved and efficient management of the existing San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service. This is consistent with the goals of the State of California and is supported by the Administration.