

Regional Governance Working Group for the San Joaquin Rail Service Legislative Platform for 2013/14

STATE

PRIORITY 1: Support increased state funding for state-supported Amtrak conventional passenger rail services.

Background

Section 209 of the Passenger Rail Investment and Improvement Act (PRIIA) of 2008 requires that all Amtrak service on routes of 750 miles or less in length become the funding responsibility of the state. The San Joaquin and the Capitol Corridor services are already on a full net-cost-of-service contract with Amtrak, however a portion of the Pacific Surfliner service is federally subsidized. As a result of PRIIA, starting in FY 13/14 the full net-cost of operation of the Pacific Surfliner service must be funded by the State of California. It is estimated that the additional state costs for the assumption of the full net cost of service for the Pacific Surfliner service will be about an additional \$20 million for FY 13/14.

To preserve and improve current levels of conventional intercity service in California (including the San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail Service), it is important that San Joaquin Corridor entities jointly advocate with the Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor Agency, the Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority, and the Coast Rail Coordinating Council for increased state funding to offset the loss of federal funds and also to provide additional funding for more service. Based upon CTC fund-estimates projections for the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) it appears that increased state PTA revenues are adequate to accommodate the transfer of Amtrak-borne costs and may be able to support additional conventional rail service.

PRIORITY 2: Apply for a \$300,000 Caltrans Partnership Planning Grant for Developing the Initial Business Plan for the San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority (SJPA) and to define the roles and responsibilities of Caltrans and the new SJPA.

Background

On September 29, 2012 Governor Brown signed AB 1779 which enables regional governance of the San Joaquin Intercity Rail Service by a new joint-powers authority. Prior to the administrative responsibilities of the San Joaquin service being transferred to the new joint-powers authority a Business Plan must be developed for the San Joaquin Rail Service that shall be consistent with the State Rail Plan and future CHSRA Business Plans. The Business Plan for the San Joaquin Rail Service shall include an overall operating plan including proposed service improvements to increase ridership and provide for increased traveler demands in the corridor, short-term and long-term capital improvement

programs, funding requirements, and an action plan with specific goals and objectives. Proposals to expand and modify passenger services identified in the Business Plan shall be accompanied by identification of all associated costs and ridership projections. In addition, the Business Plan for the San Joaquin Service shall establish among other things: fares, operating strategies, capital improvements needed, and marketing strategies.

Under the provisions of AB 1779, the state would continue to have prominent and very important roles with the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service, even after the administration responsibility is turned over to the Authority. The state will continue to provide the funding necessary for service operations, administration and marketing. Furthermore, Caltrans Division of Rail would remain responsible for the development of the Statewide Rail Plan; the coordination and integration between the three state-supported intercity passenger rail services; the preparation of grant applications to the federal government; and the development of state budget requests. As a key part of the Business Plan, this planning grant would be used to work with Caltrans to determine the appropriate roles and responsibilities between the new JPA and Caltrans towards developing a partnership that best supports improved intercity rail service and efficient governance and management in the San Joaquin Corridor.

FEDERAL

PRIORITY 1: Support federal funding of the “Merced-Le Grand Double Track Project” which is a high-priority capital improvement project for the San Joaquin Intercity Rail Service.

Background

The Merced to Le Grand Double Track Project is a 16.4-mile long second main track project from Merced to Le Grand. This Project extends two main tracks from west Le Grand to west Planada, resulting in the construction of 8.4 miles of double track main line, including two sets of double crossovers and all necessary signal and grade crossing work. This project, estimated at about \$40 million will improve reliability of service, enhance rail traffic flow, safety, and result in increased speed for the San Joaquin intercity passenger rail service and will benefit the entire San Joaquin Corridor. All work will be performed on BNSF right-of-way and Caltrans has determined that this project will have no significant impact on the physical environment.

PRIORITY 2: Support federal funding of a high-priority project or high priority projects which will improve the safety of the San Joaquin Intercity Passenger Rail Service.

Background

The San Joaquin Corridor should seek federal funds to improve public safety for rail passengers, pedestrians, and for vehicles.