Gov. Jerry Brown signed legislation that allows the Caltrain electrification project to proceed as a design/build project that allows agencies to combine design and construction activities into one contract, which helps manage risk, speed up project delivery, foster innovation and potentially reduce cost, according to the transit agency.

Transit agencies’ authority to issue design/build contracts expires at the end of this year, but Senate Bill 785, extends the authorization until 2024. Extension of design-build authority was necessary for Caltrain’s electrification project to proceed as planned, according to the transit agency.

Part of the Caltrain Modernization Program, the electrification project will transform the system from a diesel-based service to an electrified overhead system, featuring high-performance electric trains that operate off an overhead power system. In September 2013, Caltrain approved the use of the design/build contracting approach for designing and installing the electrification infrastructure. A request for qualifications has been issued to potential contractors. A request for proposal will be issued January 2015 and contract award expected in fall 2015, according to the transit agency.