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Media Contact: Seamus Murphy, 650.508.6388

**Caltrain Applauds MTC Endorsement of Regional Agreement to Fund Modernization**

The Metropolitan Transportation Commission approval today of a regional agreement to fully fund the electrification of Caltrain is the first step in bringing modernized rail service to the dynamic region spanning San Francisco to San Jose.

The Memorandum of Understanding between the California High-Speed Rail Authority and more than a half-dozen Bay Area public agencies takes advantage of local, regional and federal funding to leverage hundreds of millions of dollars in high-speed rail matching funds for investment in electrification and modernization of Caltrain. This investment could result in a modernized Caltrain system as soon as 2020.

“Today's action represents the first step in what will eventually be a great leap forward for transit on the Peninsula,” said Caltrain Executive Director Mike Scanlon. “It demonstrates how we can effectively prepare for the future and at the same time realize tangible, more immediate benefits for our riders and our communities.”

The agreement must be endorsed by all the parties, which include the San Francisco County Transportation Authority, the San Mateo County Transportation Authority, the Santa Clara Valley Transportation Authority, the City of San Jose, the City and County of San Francisco, and the Peninsula Corridor Joint Powers Board, which owns and operates Caltrain.

Since the regional agreement was announced last week support for the critical project that would electrify and modernize the Caltrain system has been growing. A list of [positive endorsements](#) for the “blended” system is posted the Caltrain website.

At today’s MTC hearing, a broad range of interests representing business, labor, environmentalists and local governments expressed overwhelming support for the breakthrough agreement.
With an electrified system Caltrain will be able to operate lighter-weight electric vehicles with significant performance advantages compared to the existing diesel rail technology.

Electrification will bring a faster, cleaner, quieter, more efficient rail system to the corridor, with more frequent service to more stations and significantly increased ridership. A modernized Caltrain system will accommodate future job and population growth in the region.

In addition, modernization is an important step in stabilizing the rail agency’s long-struggling finances. Caltrain is one of the few transit agencies in the country that does not have its own, dedicated tax base or source of revenue.

More riders will bring more revenue to the system, which has continued to depend on one-time funding, administrative cuts and service reductions to resolve an annual structural deficit. Increased revenues generated by increased ridership would reduce the subsidy required to operate the service, improving the financial viability of the system and freeing up funding to support other local transit services in San Francisco, San Mateo and Santa Clara Counties.

Additional improvements, which would be done after Caltrain is electrified, would be needed before future high-speed rail service could operate on the corridor.

Currently, Caltrain is studying the feasibility of various alternatives to determine what infrastructure improvements will be needed to support high-speed rail while minimizing the impact on surrounding communities.

The agreement specifies that future improvements would be limited to support blended high-speed and commuter rail operations on a system that is primarily two-tracks.

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Comments on the MOU:

"Modernizing Caltrain has and will continue to be one of my highest priorities for our region. It is the spine of our transportation system and it must be brought into the 21st century. Now the regional agreement to fully fund the electrification of Caltrain and positive train control will make this a reality.

An electrified Caltrain will be more efficient, increase revenue, and reduce costs. It will also connect to other rail segments throughout the state to reduce pollution and traffic, improve the movement of goods, and provide more options for the traveling public and businesses. Bravo!"  
U.S. Representative Anna G. Eshoo (CA-14)
"Last April, Congresswoman Anna Eshoo, Senator Joe Simitian and I called for a blended approach for high-speed rail on the San Francisco Peninsula. I am pleased the High-Speed Rail Authority has embraced this blended plan by including the approach in this MOU.

The $1.5 billion investment detailed in the MOU will drastically improve service time for the hundreds of thousands of Caltrain commuters, reduce emissions from existing diesel engines, and put in place a plan ensuring the use of the existing Caltrain right-of-way for the potential future of high-speed rail operations.” - California Assemblyman Rich Gordon (D-21)

"The San Francisco Transit Riders Union supports bringing early investment of high-speed rail funds to the San Francisco region," said San Francisco Transit Rider's Union Board Member Robert Boden. "These funds will support projects vital for transit riders in San Francisco, including making Caltrain faster and more frequent."

"BayRail Alliance has been a long time supporter of Caltrain electrification and we are pleased to see that this agreement has been crafted," said Bay Rail Alliance President Andy Chow. "Electrification offers faster and more frequent service on the Peninsula and can meet the increasing ridership demand."

"The Broadway, Burlingame Merchants Association (BID) enthusiastically endorses the plan (as expressed in the M.O.U.) to electrify the Caltrain corridor between San Francisco and San Jose," said Association President Ross C. Bruce. "The benefits to the region in general and Broadway in particular seem substantial. Most importantly the plan would modernize our train system, stabilize Caltrain's financing, increase efficiency while decreasing pollution."

"Electrification brings quieter, faster, cleaner trains. Service would be cheaper and more efficient to run," said Santa Clara County Supervisor and Caltrain Vice Chair Ken Yeager. "I look forward to exploring this opportunity to fund electrification sooner than we hoped."

"Electrifying Caltrain has been a priority for many Peninsula communities for over a decade and this agreement will finally provide the resources to make it happen," said Redwood City Councilman and SamTrans Board member Jeff Gee. "For the first time, we have an opportunity to truly advance improvements that provide Peninsula commuters with faster, quieter, more frequent service to more stations along the corridor."

"We need to take advantage of this opportunity to make critically-needed upgrades to the Caltrain system. Caltrain already helps improve air quality and reduces traffic congestion by providing Peninsula workers with an affordable, reliable commute alternative," said Daly City Councilman David Canepa. "Electrifying the system will radically enhance those benefits and
will help improve our regional economy by creating thousands of desperately-needed jobs for local workers."

"Caltrain service is critical to Peninsula cities and the electrification project will help ensure the future viability of the system," said City of San Carlos Mayor Andy Klein. "The agreement to invest early in electrification will help us realize dramatic regional environmental and economic benefits while also limiting future improvements to only those that are needed to support blended Caltrain and HSR service on primarily a two-track system."

"We're pleased to support this agreement for the early advancement of Caltrain electrification," said San Mateo Building and Trade Council Executive Officer William Nack. "This agreement demonstrates a regional commitment to help our economy rebound by creating thousands of construction industry jobs and improving access to key employment centers along the San Francisco Peninsula."

"Electrifying the Caltrain Corridor will enable Caltrain to carry more riders and stop at more stations, providing more relief for traffic congestion and rising gas prices, and less environmental harm," said Former Mayor of Palo Alto and Friends of Caltrain Co-Founder Yoriko Kishimoto. "The high speed rail project deserves a lot of scrutiny but if it goes forward, this path provides major benefits to the region."