

## Caltrain electrification proponents lobby Capitol Hill

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Written by [Mischa Wanek-Libman, Engineering Editor](#) | Monday, March 13, 2017



*Caltrain photo*

**Companies whose employees depend on Caltrain to get to and from work in the Bay Area joined agency representatives in Washington, D.C., this past week to advocate for approval of a grant that would fund a modernization project.**

In February, a \$647-million Full Funding Grant Agreement (FFGA) for Caltrain's Peninsula Corridor Electrification Project (PCEP) **was deferred by the U.S. Department of Transportation** until the Trump Administration releases its budget recommendations to Congress.

The electrification project aims to improve system performance by electrifying the Caltrain Corridor from San Francisco's 4th and King Caltrain Station to approximately the Tamien Caltrain Station, convert diesel-hauled to Electric Multiple Unit trains and increase service up to six Caltrain trains per peak hour per direction.

Caltrain Executive Director Jim Hartnett, who was also in Washington, D.C., during the past week stumping for the project, notes his optimism that the time spent in the nation's capitol convinced key decision-makers that the electrification project is the kind of investment the administration is hoping to move forward.

"Since we've been here, we have met with supporters from both sides of the aisle who understand that when it comes to investing in infrastructure, this project checks all of the boxes," said Hartnett. "Caltrain electrification upgrades service on an existing system that serves the country's fastest growing companies, the rest of the funding is already lined up, it creates thousands of jobs nationwide and if the goal is to focus on projects that are ready to go, we aren't just shovel ready, our shovels are in the ground waiting for the OK from Washington to turn some dirt."

The Federal Transit Administration must approve the \$647 million FFA before construction can begin to match \$1.3 billion that has already been secured from other sources.

"Caltrain has already awarded contracts to complete the project and is prepared to issue a notice to proceed with construction immediately after the federal grant agreement is signed," said Hartnett.

Caltrain explains that the delay has resulted in great concern among Bay Area businesses and riders who depend on Caltrain to support the economy of Silicon Valley and beyond. Caltrain's efforts are supported by dozens of private sector employers that depend on Caltrain to provide their employees with a faster commute alternative in the wake of increasing congestion on the region's highways. Representatives from these employers including Facebook, Google, Genentech and Stanford, joined Caltrain on the trip to Washington to advocate for approval of the federal investment.

Caltrain says that while it and the agency's partners have been working diligently to ensure the federal delay does not hinder the project's future, it has presented tremendous additional challenges. Last week, Caltrain **negotiated an extension** of the deadline for contractors to begin construction, while the agency awaits the federal decision about the execution of the funding agreement. The contractors agreed to extend the deadline for four months, from March 1 to June 30.

"I have personally invited the Secretary of Transportation to come to San Carlos to see this project first-hand and hear from the companies and communities that depend upon this work to keep the economy rolling," said Hartnett. "Moving forward with this decision will not only benefit Caltrain riders, but it will also benefit the thousands of American workers standing by to build the project."

<http://www.railwayage.com/index.php/passenger/commuter-regional/caltrain-electrification-project-proponents-take-to-washington-dc-to-convince-lawmakers-to-approve-grant.html>