



*Delta-Sierra Group
Mother Lode Chapter
P.O. Box 9258
Stockton CA 95208*

Mitch Weiss
Executive Director
California Transportation Commission
1120 N Street, MS 52
Sacramento, CA 95814

June 13, 2020

RE: San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRRC)/California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) FY 2020 Trade Corridor Enhancement Program (TCEP) Grant Application

Dear Mr. Weiss:

The Delta-Sierra Group of the Sierra Club is writing in support of the SJRRRC/Caltrans FY 2020 TCEP grant application for the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project. Funding of this request will allow SJRRRC/Caltrans to leverage other State funds to construct a transformative rail infrastructure project to improve safety on the freight network, increase the efficiency of freight and passenger rail movement, and facilitate continued economic growth and competitiveness in the greater Central Valley.

The Stockton Diamond is the busiest, most congested at-grade railway junction in California. The current, at-grade configuration of the track results in significant delays to Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and BNSF Railway (BNSF) freight trains, as well as other freight and passenger trains in the area. These delays make the Stockton Diamond the worst freight rail bottleneck in California, inhibiting the expansion of the Amtrak San Joaquins and Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) service through the Bay Area/Central Valley region increasing mass transit and increases idling emissions.

The Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project will grade separate the two north-south UPRR mainline tracks from the two east-west BNSF mainline tracks. Project scope also includes bike, pedestrian, and roadway improvements at ten at-grade local road crossings in the City of Stockton, enhancing safety and access for residents.

There are numerous benefits to the public as well, including:

- Travel time savings from a reduction in freight delays
- Fuel cost savings from a reduction in idling
- Greater efficiency for freight rail movement that lowers truck traffic through Stockton
- Improved air quality in a disadvantaged area of Downtown Stockton
- Reduced blockage and delays for pedestrians and motorists at key local road crossings

SJRRRC/Caltrans are requesting \$100 million in TCEP funding for the construction of the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation Project (\$40 million from statewide TCEP funds and \$60 million from regional corridor TCEP funds). At an estimated total cost of \$237 million, the TCEP award will be matched by additional State funding (SB-132 and ITIP) that have already been secured toward project completion.

Given the many emission reduction benefits associated with this project for the disadvantaged communities in Stockton, California, the Delta-Sierra Group urges the California Transportation Commission to approve SJRRRC's TCEP grant application. Thank you for considering our comments.

Sincerely,

Mary Elizabeth M.S., R.E.H.S.
Delta-Sierra Group Conservation Chair