STATE OF CALIFORNIA Gavin Newsom, Governor

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320 WEST 4TH STREET, SUITE 500 LOS ANGELES, CA 90013

November 22, 2022

Mr. Serge Stanich California High-Speed Rail Authority 770 L Street, Suite 620, MS-1 Sacramento, CA 95814



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STATE CLEARING HOUSE

Re: California High-Speed Rail – Palmdale to Burbank Project Section SCH 2014071074 — Draft Environmental Impact Report / Environmental Impact Statement

Dear Mr. Serge Stanich:

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission/CPUC) has jurisdiction over rail crossings (crossings) in California. CPUC ensures that crossings are safely designed, constructed, and maintained. The Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Branch (RCEB) is in receipt of the *Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) / Environment Impact Statement (EIS)* for the proposed California High-Speed Rail – Palmdale to Burbank Project Section. California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is the lead agency.

The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section will provide a High-Speed Rail (HSR) connection from the city of Palmdale near the vicinity of Spruce Court just west of Sierra Highway in the north, to the city of Burbank in the south. The Palmdale to Burbank Project Section includes a station in the city of Burbank near the Hollywood Burbank Airport (formerly Bob Hope Airport). Chapter 2 of the DEIR/EIS outlines the Palmdale to Burbank (P-B) Build Alternatives SR14, SR14A, E1, E1A, E2, and E2A. The DEIR/EIS states that the Preferred Alternative for the proposed project is the SR14A Build Alternative, which includes the Burbank Station (Refer to Chapter 8, Preferred Alternative and Station Sites).

CPUC General Orders set forth regulations governing construction and design for new crossings or alteration of existing crossings. As such, DEIR/EIS Appendix 2-A Roadway and Grade Separation and Appendix 2-B Railroad Crossings should include CPUC General Orders under Applicable Design Standards for alteration of existing state and local roadways.

CPUC General Order (GO) 88-B establishes criteria for altering existing crossings, including roadway realignment, reconstruction or modification of grade-separated structures, and construction of a grade-separated structure that eliminates an existing grade crossing. The Authority will be required to submit a GO 88-B request for alteration of each existing crossing on the corridor unless an application to the Commission is required. Requests to alter existing crossings may be approved by RCEB staff, provided completion of request as outlined in GO 88-B, Section 5, and consensus among parties. Roadways closed at the HSR corridor may require GO 88-B authorization if a nearby grade crossing remains in place. Under Commission GO 75-D, CPUC shall be notified of the closure of any existing crossings.

GO 88-B also establishes cases for which the Authority must apply to the Commission for authorization, including construction of new highway-rail or rail-rail crossings. Refer to the CPUC Rules of Practice and Procedure (www.cpuc.ca.gov/rpp/), Rule 3.9 Railroad Across Public Road and Rule 3.10 Railroad Across Railroad, for new crossing application requirements. You may consult with RCEB staff to determine the need for authorization by GO 88-B or by formal application to the Commission at each proposed crossing on the corridor.

DEIR/EIS Chapter 2: Alternatives and Chapter 8: Preferred Alternative and Station Sites detail proposed typical cross-sections with minimum clearances. All grade-separated structures, including rail-rail structures, are subject to minimum vertical and horizontal clearance requirements outlined in Commission GO 26-D, Section 2, Section 3, and Section 4. Clearance between parallel tracks is governed by GO 26-D, Section 5. Public roads, highways, and streets crossing under tracks and over tracks are subject to GO 26-D, Section 12 and Section 13, respectively.

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The overhead contact system (OCS) powering the HSR is subject to clearance requirements stated in GO 95 and GO 176. Construction and maintenance of walkways adjacent to track is subject to Commission GO 118-A, which details standards for vegetation abatement, surface materials, slope, track clearance, and width. GO 72-B details the rules governing the construction and maintenance of crossings at grade of railroads with public streets, roads, and highways.

A diagnostic meeting is required for each crossing alteration or construction. The diagnostic team consists of representatives from the railroads, roadway agencies, local government agencies, CPUC, and other stakeholders. You may contact RCEB staff to schedule diagnostic meetings and to discuss preliminary designs of all proposed crossings. Section 3.2.7 Mitigation Measures includes considerations for changes to traffic signal operations and roadway alignments during construction, including existing highway-rail crossings approaches. Such alterations to crossing roadway approaches and traffic signal phasing or preemption timing require CPUC review and may require GO 88-B authorization prior to implementation.

Appendix 2-A provides plans sheets for roadway, grade separations, access roads and Appendix 2-B: Railroad Crossings, lists proposed roadway crossings of high-speed rail, modifications, and closures. According to GO 75-D, Section 2, CPUC's policy is to reduce the number of at-grade crossings of freight and passenger railroad mainlines. RCEB recommends that the entire HSR corridor be grade separated with no at-grade highway-rail crossings. Grade separated crossings provide a greater level of safety, for both the roadway users as well as railroad employees, than at-grade highway-rail crossings.

Please continue to keep RCEB informed of the project's development. If you have any questions or require clarification on CPUC's role in rail crossings projects, you may contact Chris Palas at Christopher.palas@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

Chris Palas

Utilities Engineer

Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch

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Rail Safety Division

CC: State Clearinghouse, <u>state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov</u>

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