

# Federal board blesses Fresno-Bakersfield high-speed rail line

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By Michael Doyle



Conceptual view of California high-speed rail.

## SPECIAL TO THE BEE

The federal Surface Transportation Board on Tuesday made public its [authorization for construction](#) of a 114-mile high-speed passenger rail line between Fresno and Bakersfield.

In a 56-page report, the federal board spelled out its decision on what would be the second section of the state's planned high-speed rail system.

"The proposed Line will provide the public with electric-powered high-speed rail service that provides predictable and consistent travel times between major urban centers with connectivity to airports, mass transit systems, and the highway system network in the San Joaquin Valley," the board's majority concluded.

The board formally voted 2-1 on Monday to authorize the construction, with board member Ann D. Begeman dissenting.

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"Since the California High-Speed Rail Authority first came to the Board last year just before it intended to break ground, the majority's primary focus seems to have been getting out of the Authority's way," Begeman wrote. " But doing so here ... could have very serious consequences."

The Surface Transportation Board approved the Merced-Fresno section on a 2-1 vote in June 2013.

The system would, when completed, provide high-speed intercity passenger rail service over more than 800 miles of new rail line throughout California.

Check back later Tuesday for more high-speed rail coverage from The Bee's Tim Sheehan from the [California High-Speed Rail Authority](#) board meeting in Sacramento.

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