

Perea, Swearengin attend rail groundbreaking; a year ago, Perea passed in similar situation

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Governor Jerry Brown, center, ceremoniously signs a section of rail, flanked by his wife, Anne Gust Brown, center right, and Gina McCarthy, Administrator for the EPA, center left, and other dignitaries sign at the groundbreaking for High Speed Rail, Tuesday afternoon. Others from left, Fresno County Supervisor Henry R. Perea-partially seen, Joseph Szabo, administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration, McCarthy, Gov. Brown, Anne Gust Brown, Robbie Hunter, secretary-treasurer of the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California and Mayor Ashley Swearengin.

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A year ago, Fresno County Supervisor Henry R. Perea was to be part of the groundbreaking for the new First 5 Fresno County building currently under construction in downtown Fresno.

Perea then backed out. Kendra Rogers, who at the time was First 5's executive director, said the reason was because she had invited Fresno Mayor Ashley Swearengin to both attend and speak at the event.

On Tuesday, a similar set of circumstances didn't stop Perea.

Both Swearingin and Perea were in attendance at the groundbreaking for the state's high-speed rail project in downtown Fresno.

Swearingin offered opening remarks for the event, which featured Gov. Jerry Brown and others. Perea didn't talk, but was recognized for his work on behalf of the project.

Later, both Swearingin and Perea were part of the initial group including Brown that signed a ceremonial piece of rail that was at the groundbreaking, and Perea later posted photos from the event on his Facebook page.

A year ago it was a different story.

Rogers last year provided The Bee with text messages from Perea from the time when news broke that Swearingin would attend the groundbreaking. "Mayor Swearingin..... r u kidding me?????" Perea texted.

Later texts from Perea's assistant ending with one saying to take Perea "off the speaking list and he doesn't need to be quoted on the press release."

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