

**MONDAY MORNING GROUP OF WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY  
ANNUAL ADVOCACY TRIP – SACRAMENTO, CA  
FEBRUARY 5-6, 2024**

**SUPPORT THE COACHELLA VALLEY RAIL PROJECT**

**ISSUE:** Inland Southern California is the fastest growing region in California and fifth fastest growing region in the United States. More than 160,000 people travel through the San Geronio Pass each day, demonstrating a clear need for daily intercity rail service that provides a meaningful alternative to traveling on Interstate 10 or State Route 60. Advancing the Coachella Valley Rail (CV Rail) Project will deliver service that is vital to the regional economy and will meet the diverse transportation needs of millions of residents.

**ACTION:** The Monday Morning Group urges the Governor’s Administration and the State Legislature to take the following actions related to the CV Rail Project:

- Urge State Legislators to preserve all Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) funding from SB 125 (2023) as they weigh cuts to address a multi-year budget deficit. Riverside County Transportation Commission (RCTC) voted on December 13, 2023, to utilize these funds for the balance of the CV Rail Tier II Project-Level environmental analysis.
- Pursue delegation of National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) authority through the California State Transportation Agency (CalSTA) to the California High-Speed Rail Authority in efforts to expedite the CV Rail Project.
- Support CalSTA leadership in prioritizing the CV Rail Project in their ongoing negotiations with Union Pacific Railroad (UP).
- Thank CalSTA Secretary Toks Omishakin for his partnership and advocacy on behalf of CV Rail, including for the recent federal award from the Corridor Identification and Development (Corridor ID) Program. Encourage the Secretary to continue voicing support for the Project and efforts to secure necessary federal funding.

**BACKGROUND:** The CV Rail Project extends approximately 144 miles between Los Angeles County and the Coachella Valley, with stops in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties, including up to five new stations on the east end. Additionally, the rail service would significantly expand economic opportunities by opening travel to restaurants, resorts, music festivals, sports facilities, and commercial and retail centers. The nine stations along the route also offer a host of transit-oriented development opportunities.

RCTC certified the Final Tier I/Program-Level Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report in July 2022 and anticipates the Tier II Project-Level environmental analysis phase will commence in 2024. Tier II is expected to take several years to reach completion. Delegating NEPA authority to the California High-Speed Rail Authority for CV Rail during this phase may expedite the timeline to completion.

To date, over \$40 million for the Tier II phase has been secured via the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) and Interregional Transportation Improvement Program (ITIP), as well as the federal Corridor ID Program. On December 13, 2023, the Commission voted to utilize \$40 million of TIRCP funding allocated in SB 125 as a part of the Budget Act of 2023 to fund the balance needed to begin the Tier II phase. However, the availability of TIRCP funding for CV Rail may be in jeopardy after the Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) projected a \$68 billion multi-year budget shortfall and cited \$2.2 billion in transportation funds that could be reduced in part or entirely to help address this shortfall.

Despite the state budgetary threat to advance CV Rail, the Governor’s Administration continues to support this Project in their federal advocacy, including in CalSTA Secretary Omishakin’s January 2023 letter to Federal Rail Administrator Amit Bose, to continue voicing support for the Project, as well as efforts to secure necessary funding.

Furthermore, RCTC and CalSTA continue to engage UP, which owns the right-of-way and operates freight rail along the eastern portion of the preferred route for the CV Rail Project. Receiving approval to build an additional rail and operate intercity passenger service from UP is critical to ensuring the Project’s overall success and continuity of UP’s rail operations.