

July 1, 2023

Chairman Smith and Members of the Board
Nevada High-Speed Rail Authority
c/o Regional Transportation Commission of Southern Nevada
600 S. Grand Central Parkway, Suite 350
Las Vegas, NV 89106

Re: July 2023 Brightline West Report

Dear Chairman Smith and Members of the Board:

Since our last report in January 2023, Brightline West has continued to make significant progress in the development of high-speed passenger rail service between Las Vegas and Southern California. The purpose of this letter is to provide a status update on the project.

As noted in our last report, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) passed in 2021 could play an important role in financing the system. The IIJA provides a path for private entities, such as Brightline, to be eligible to compete for the USDOT's Federal-State Partnership for Intercity Passenger Rail Grant Program (FSP), when partnered with an applicable public agency. In April, with assistance from Brightline, NDOT submitted an application for an FSP grant for \$3.75 billion. Combined with the \$25 million RAISE grant described below, a full FSP grant award would result in federal funding for approximately 30% of the Brightline West system's total estimated cost of \$12 billion. The balance of the project budget will be privately funded through a mix of debt and equity. Grant award announcements are expected within the coming months.

The USDOT recently announced the award of a \$25 million federal RAISE grant to the San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA) for final design and construction of the Brightline West high-speed rail stations to be constructed in Victor Valley and Hesperia, California. A copy of the SBCTA press release regarding the RAISE grant is enclosed. This grant is a further important element of our project financing and reflects the strong partnerships we have with stakeholders in both states.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is serving as the lead agency for the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and related environmental permitting. The Environmental Assessment for the Victor Valley/Rancho Cucamonga project was approved by FRA and circulated for public comment on October 28. Based on FRA's schedule, the remaining environmental permitting for the system is expected to be completed by the end of July 2023. (Progress on NEPA permitting may be viewed at <https://www.permits.performance.gov/permitting-project/brightline-west-cajon-pass-high-speed-rail-project>)

The Brightline Florida project also continues to make important strides. It recently completed construction of its 170-mile extension from West Palm Beach to Orlando. Trains on this new extension will travel at speeds up to 125 m.p.h. in some locations. The Orlando station is located inside the Orlando International Airport, which greatly enhances the connectivity of the entire Brightline system with other transportation modes. A new state-of-the-art vehicle maintenance facility has also been constructed as part of the project. Final testing is being completed in anticipation of passenger service beginning this summer. Guests may already purchase tickets for travel beginning on September 1.

Our team is available to answer any questions and provide an in-person briefing at a future meeting of the Nevada High-Speed Rail Authority.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah Watterson".

Sarah Watterson
President



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 28, 2023

SBCTA, Brightline West awarded \$25 million for High Desert stations as rail project moves closer

San Bernardino, California (June 28, 2023) – The San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA), in partnership with Brightline West, has been awarded a \$25 million federal grant to build stations in Victor Valley and Hesperia for the much-anticipated high-speed rail line between Las Vegas and Rancho Cucamonga.

The grant, through the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) program, will fund the final design and construction of the two High Desert stations – both critical elements of the Brightline West rail project.

When finished, the \$12 billion project will create America’s first true high-speed rail system spanning 218 miles. The fully electric, emission-free system between Las Vegas and the Rancho Cucamonga Metrolink station will offer a modern, efficient alternative between the High Desert and the East and West Valleys of San Bernardino County. The terminus in Rancho Cucamonga is significant due to its central location along Metrolink’s San Bernardino Line, the busiest commuter rail line in Southern California with connections to Los Angeles to the west and Redlands to the east.

Brightline West projects more than 11 million trips annually, removing 3 million cars every year from the road. In addition, it will eliminate more than 400,000 tons of carbon emissions each year. The project will generate more than 35,000 jobs during construction, including 10,000 union jobs and more than 1,000 permanent jobs to operate and maintain the system. Brightline West’s overall investment also includes more than \$800 million in roadway improvements along the I-15 freeway.

“We are thrilled to receive a \$25 million RAISE grant for the Victor Valley and Hesperia stations and are grateful for the overwhelming support of Senator Alex Padilla and our local Congressional delegation – Representatives Jay Obernolte and Pete Aguilar – in securing this critical funding. When complete, the Brightline project will be a game changer for our region, reducing commute times, increasing job opportunities and improving the quality of life for residents,” said Art Bishop, President of SBCTA and an Town Councilmember in Apple Valley, where the Victor Valley station will be located.

Dr. Raymond Wolfe, Executive Director of SBCTA, said the funding award for the Victor Valley and Hesperia stations paves the way for a larger grant sought by Brightline West for the Las Vegas to Rancho Cucamonga project, which will improve access and connectivity across Southern California. “This will provide a direct link between the High Desert, Rancho Cucamonga, downtown Los Angeles

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and our own East Valley, reducing the need to rely on personal vehicles for daily commutes, improving air quality and closing the live-work gap for millions of people. Along with other commuter projects either under way or under development, including the Arrow Line and the West Valley Connector bus rapid-transit system, Brightline West represents a cost-effective, 21st century solution to our region's transportation challenges," Wolfe said.

"This federal funding through the historic Bipartisan Infrastructure Law is a major step in expanding rail through the High Desert," Senator Padilla said. "Connecting the future Brightline West corridor with Metrolink will help take cars off the road, reducing traffic congestion and emissions to create healthier air for communities throughout the region."

"I'm proud to have worked alongside our San Bernardino County Transportation Authority to secure funding through the Department of Transportation to support the final design and construction of Brightline rail stations in Hesperia and Victor Valley. This high speed rail project will bring significant new economic activity into our community, boost local job availability, and help to alleviate traffic by linking the High Desert to Los Angeles and Las Vegas. I look forward to continuing to advocate for the completion of this project," said Representative Obernolte (CA-23).

"Investing in our infrastructure not only creates good-paying jobs, it keeps our communities connected and spurs economic growth," said Representative Aguilar (CA-30). "That's why I'm proud to have helped secure over \$117 million for Inland Empire transportation projects last year. I will continue working hand-in-glove with our local community partners to secure federal resources that improve the Inland Empire economy and raise the quality of life for our residents."

"The High Desert stations are an integral component to our 218-mile system and will connect millions of residents with America's first true high-speed rail system," said Sarah Watterson, President of Brightline West. "We're moving towards a groundbreaking later this year, kickstarting one of the largest job creators in the country and setting the stage for a new era in transportation. We are appreciative of our federal partners, the SBCTA and all those who support our system."

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