

**To: Assemblywoman Diane Harkey and Staff**

**From: Gino Folchi**

**Date: Monday January 16, 2012**

**Re: Weekly HSR Clips January 8 to January 16**

### **Blogs**

#### **High-speed rail cost increase latest in public works projects**

The final tally of the state's high-speed rail project will go well past \$100 billion. Although it's routinely lauded as one of the world's most notable engineering feats, the Golden Gate Bridge is also a prime example of how the price tag of a public works project can increase exponentially as it becomes more fully developed. **Will Reisman** [SF Examiner](#) – 01/08/12

#### **R, Ye Mateys! R Traffic Be Hurtin!**

Fast-tracking our rail and freeways - It bears repeating during these dark economic times—we need to focus on spending our funds well, and make sure any new transportation/infrastructure initiatives are clearly defined and appropriately budgeted. So when Westside Assemblyman Mike Feuer (D-Los Angeles) offers a way to fast-track the freeway and rail initiatives of the still-popular Measure R without raising new taxes, it's worth paying close attention. **Ken Alpern** [City Watch](#) – 01/09/12

#### **Bullet train dying — even though two potent critiques still ignored**

Does Jerry Brown really think he can get away with arguing, as he did Thursday, that we need to keep following the costly course laid out by the California High-Speed Rail Authority even as he unveils the most austere budget in modern state history? Or is this all kabuki before the plug is pulled? **Chris Reed** [CalWhine](#) – 01/09/12

## **Dianne Feinstein urges moving high-speed rail to CalTrans**

Democratic Sen. Dianne Feinstein this week added her voice to the chorus of those who want the California Department of Transportation to take over the state's increasingly controversial high-speed rail project.

**Michael Doyle** [Capitol Alert](#) – 01/10/12

## **High-Speed Rail Authority press secretary bound for Wal-Mart**

Rachel Wall, press secretary for the embattled California High-Speed Rail Authority, is leaving the agency to do public relations for a company that has its own image issues from time to time: Wal-Mart.

**David Siders** [Capitol Alert](#) – 01/10/12

## **Why Jerry Will Kill High-Speed Rail**

It's High-Speed Rail fanatic Jerry Brown who himself will kill the California High-Speed Rail Authority. The reason: His first priority this year is passing his \$7 billion tax increase ( which [might only bring in \\$4.8 billion](#), according to the Legislative Analyst). Or some equivalent tax increase he works out with others proposing tax increases.

**John Seiler** [CalWatchDog](#) – 01/10/12

## **California's High Speed Thugs**

Governor Brown's [announcement](#) that he plans to raise taxes while cutting spending on items like education and VA hospitals was an especially bitter pill to swallow last week. The announcement came just as I was in King's County, inspecting the first planned segment of our (over) \$100 billion boondoggle High Speed Rail project.

**Cynthia Ward** [Red County](#) – 01/10/12

## **Falsehoods Abound in Case of California High-Speed Rail**

High-speed rail remains one of the most costly forms of transportation. Heritage's Ronald Utt has [enumerated](#) the fiscal pitfalls, pointing to lower-than-expected ridership rates, rising ticket prices, and exorbitant government subsidies in other countries with high-speed rail systems. As is the case in California, the price tag for high-speed rail projects often exceeds original estimates and puts an additional burden on states and

taxpayers already struggling in a weakened economy amid massive budget deficits. **Emily Goff** [Heritage Foundation](#) – 01/10/12

**Van Ark leaves High speed-rail Authority leaving project in flux**  
CEO Roelof van Ark resigned from the high-speed rail board today, seemingly out of nowhere. The executive was with the Authority only since May 2010. He said his proudest accomplishment was delivering an honest business plan and leaves to focus on his family and other interests. **Kathy Hamilton** [Examiner](#) – 01/12/12

**HSR politics: The politician's vs. the public's view of the project**  
High-Speed Rail has become a political battle between Republicans and Democrats both at the state and federal level. However the public does not view this project politically. Example, there are more than seven citizen groups who watch this project on a daily basis. Some were established initially as watchdog groups such as Californians Advocating Responsible Rail Design (CARRD) who prides itself on transparency and process and Community Coalition on High Speed Rail (cc-hsr.org) whose original mantra was "do it right or don't do it" however as facts have come forward it's clear to everyone that there is a major problem with this high-speed rail project. **Kathy Hamilton** [Examiner](#) – 01/13/12

### **Now Playing in Sacramento: "Jerry Brown's Bullet Train," Rated UI For Utter Insanity**

As I and many others have written before, the rail project has been trashed by independent experts for years for deceitful estimates of ridership, project cost, ticket cost, job creation and pollution reduction, and for the inability of its staff to craft a legal business plan that avoids future taxpayer subsidies. **Chris Reed** [Flashreport](#) – 01/13/12

### **High-Speed Platinum Contracts**

It's like a runaway train pushing a side a cow on the tracks. Controversy over the \$98.5 billion-dollar-and-growing price tag? Move aside! The California High-Speed Rail Authority held a seemingly "regular"

monthly meeting in Los Angeles on Thursday. But the real story was a brewing controversy about an obscure, costly proposal for the high-profile project, which could add to the already skyrocketing costs to build a High-Speed Rail system in the state. **Katy Grimes**

[CalWatchDog](#) – 01/13/12

### **Jerry Brown vows to push forward with high-speed rail**

Less than 24 hours after the chief administrator of California's troubled high-speed rail project resigned, Gov. Jerry Brown this morning defended the \$98.5 billion project and said he will push it forward.

**David Siders** [Capitol Alert](#) -- 01/13/12

### **Fourth Down for a Train Wreck**

The High Speed Rail Authority hopes to pull off the same maneuver by spending initial dollars quickly on the massive project so that it would seem wasteful to stop the project. It's too late. The people in two polls have thrown the red flag. They demand a review of the project before a dime is spent. **Joel Fox** [Fox & Hounds](#) – 01/13/12

### **CA poll: High-speed rail should be ... derailed**

Californians will try to put a referendum on the ballot blocking the sale of bonds in the already debt-strapped Golden State. How would such a measure fare? According to [a new Survey USA poll](#), it would derail Brown's folly. **Ed Morrissey** [Hot Air](#) – 01/14/12

### **California Rail Fail: Captain Brown and the Great White Train**

California's bullet train is going off the rails, and the overseers are running for cover. The WSJ [reports](#) that Roelof van Ark, the chief executive, and Thomas Umberg, the chairman of the High Speed Rail Authority, announced they will step down from their posts as the odds against the project grow longer. **Walter Russell Mead** [American](#)

[Interest](#) – 01/15/12

## Columnists

### **Hit the brakes on the bullet train**

We don't necessarily need to demolish the ambitious train project. But we should park it in a shed for a while. Figure out exactly where it's going, how it's going to get there and who's going to pay for it. Make sure the bullet's not a boondoggle before it burns up billions. **George Skelton** [LAT](#) – 01/08/12

### **It's time to kill California's bullet train boondoggle**

Supposedly, the state would lose the federal funds if work on the San Joaquin Valley section doesn't begin later this year. However, that allocation is only a tiny droplet in the \$100 billion construction estimate. "This is the time for big ideas," Brown said Thursday, reiterating his support for the bullet train and revealing plans to fold the CHSRA into a new superagency. But this is looking more and more like a big boondoggle. It's time to pull the plug. **Dan Walters** [SacBee](#) – 01/10/12

### **Key Democratic state senators balking at current high-speed rail plan**

Republicans are uniting in opposition, and three key Democratic state senators -- Joe Simitian, of Palo Alto, chairman of the budget subcommittee overseeing transportation; Alan Lowenthal, of Long Beach, chairman of the Select Committee on High-Speed Rail; and Mark DeSaulnier, of Concord, chairman of the transportation committee -- have started applying the brakes. **Daniel Borenstein** [CC Times](#) -- 01/14/12

## Diane Harkey

### **Harkey Introduces Lemon Law for High Speed Spending**

Assemblywoman Diane Harkey has introduced AB 1455, which halts state debt funding for the high-speed rail project. **Penny Arévalo** [San Juan Capistrano Patch](#) – 01/09/12

## **Making the Rounds in the Capitol**

The bill the lemon advertises — AB 1455 by Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, a Laguna Niguel Republican — would prohibit the issuance of unencumbered debt to construct a high speed rail project. **Greg Lucas** [California's Capitol](#) – 01/09/12

## **Study supports Palmdale bullet train option over Grapevine**

Building high-speed rail over the Grapevine instead of through the Antelope Valley wouldn't necessarily save money after all, according to a staff report released Monday. Also Monday, Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, announced her introduction of a bill that would forbid the use of state bond sale proceeds to finance the project. If signed by the governor, the bill would essentially kill the project, approved by state voters in 2008. **John Cox** [Bakersfield Californian](#) – 01/09/12

## **Lawmakers Urge State To Halt High-Speed Rail**

Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, introduced what she called the “Lemon Law” to try and stop state funding for the project. Harkey said the original price tag for the project -- which would connect Los Angeles to San Francisco -- has tripled, and will end up costing taxpayers more than \$98 billion. **Staff** [KCRA 3 Sacramento](#) – 01/10/12

## **GOP legislators: High-speed rail is a lemon**

Standing beside a box of California lemons, Orange County Assemblywoman Diane Harkey and several other Republican lawmakers declared the California high-speed rail project a lemon Tuesday and urged Gov. Jerry Brown and the Legislature to abandon the project. **Brian Joseph** [OC Register](#) – 01/10/11

## **Bill will kill high-speed rail**

A Southern California legislator has introduced a bill that will effectively kill high-speed rail in the state that has garnered the early support of some local officials here on the Peninsula. Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, introduced Assembly Bill 1455 Friday.

The bill halts state debt funding for the high-speed rail project outright. **Bill Silverfarb** [Daily Journal](#) – 01/10/12

### **California Republicans Move To Derail High Speed Rail**

Assembly Bill 1455, introduced by Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, makes use of Article XVI of the state constitution, which allows the Legislature to repeal that portion of the High-Speed Rail Bond debt that is not outstanding or contracted. **Staff** [KHTS AM 1220](#) -- 01/10/12

### **State Lawmaker Proposes Bill to Pull High Speed Rail Funding**

It's been a rough ride for High Speed Rail in California. Analysts question its funding and management. Politicians debated about building in the Central Valley. Surveyed voters are skeptical. Now, Rep. Diane Harkey says it's time to pull the plug. **Jenny O'Mara** [Capitol Public Radio](#) – 01/10/12

### **Republicans propose halting sale of high-speed rail bonds**

Backed by a clutch of Republican lawmakers, Assemblywoman Diane Harkey (R-Dana Point) said the deficit-plagued state could not afford a "shiny new toy" while it cuts services to balance its books. Her bill, dubbed the "Lemon Law for High Speed Spending," would prevent bond sales to fund the 520-mile system between San Francisco and Los Angeles. **Michael J. Mishak** [LAT](#) – 01/10/12

### **All aboard!**

Every politician, it seems, has suggestions for California's beleaguered high-speed rail project these days. On Tuesday, it was Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point (Orange County). **Michael Cabanatuan** [SF Chronicle](#) – 01/10/12

### **OC Republicans Propose Bill to Halt Funding for High-Speed Rail Project**

Republican Assemblywoman Diane Harkey of Dana Point, backed by other GOP members of the Legislature including state Sen. Mimi

Walters, introduced a bill Tuesday to halt state funding for the proposed \$98-billion high-speed rail project. **Tracy Wood** [Voice of OC](#) -- 01/10/12

### **A Stake Through the Heart of Rail**

Apparently tired of all of the talk and stories around the capitol and throughout the state about the need to end the money-sucking High-Speed Rail system, Assemblywoman Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point, plans on driving a wooden stake through the heart of the High-Speed Rail plan herself, once and for all. **Katy Grimes** [CalWatchDog](#) – 01/10/12

### **California bill would block bonds for high-speed rail**

Republican Assemblywoman Diane Harkey's bill would effectively kill state debt financing for the planned system, which is raising concerns in California's Democrat-led legislature over its mounting costs. **Jim Christie** [Reuters](#) – 01/10/11

### **Bill seeks to block high-speed rail bonds**

The bill by Republican Assemblywoman Diane Harkey would work to stop state financing for the project, which has become controversial because of financing and other issues. **Staff** [Sacramento Business Journal](#) – 01/11/12

### **AB 1455 – Constitutional Lemon Law For High Speed Rail**

Increasingly, voters believe they've bought a lemon. One would think with millions of dollars for statewide marketing at their disposal, the California High Speed Rail Authority would be able to increase support for the multi-billion dollar project, which only 52% voted for in 2008. **Assemblywoman Diane Harkey** [Flashreport](#) – 01/11/12

### **OC Lawmaker: Cut Funding For 'Lemon' High-Speed Rail, Beef Up Amtrak Gap**

After only a slight majority of voters — only 52 percent — approved the original [bond](#) in 2008, statewide polls show a clear majority of

Californians want to pull the plug, Harkey said. **Brian Ping** [CBS Los Angeles](#) – 01/11/12

### **High-speed rail CEO travels to Gilroy for third time**

The meeting came three days after the California High-Speed Rail Peer Review Group urged the California Legislature not to authorize \$2.7 billion in bonds to kickstart project construction. Assemblywoman Diane Harkey introduced legislation Monday that seeks to halt state debt funding for the rail project, which has roughly tripled in costs since voters approved it in 2008. **Mark Powell** [Gilroy Dispatch](#) -- 01/11/12

### **Editorials**

High-speed rail needs a review before it's too late

When a majority of California voters approved a \$9.95 billion bond measure in 2008 to provide high-speed rail service between San Francisco and Los Angeles, they were persuaded by many touted benefits. Unfortunately, it's beginning to look like it was too good to be true. **Editorial Board** [SF Examiner](#) – 01/07/12

### **Slowing before it starts**

The Peer Group includes private-sector financial experts, a University of California dean of engineering, a former Caltrans director and a local government representative. And the group is not just one voice crying in the wilderness, but one in a string of negative project assessments from the state auditor, the state inspector general, the legislative analyst, the UC Berkeley Institute of Transportation Studies and the transportation committee of the U.S. House of Representatives. **Editorial Board** [Stockton Record](#) – 01/09/12

### **Rail illusions**

Ignoring danger signals is a reckless way to run a railroad — or a big public works project. Legislators should not need another critical report to realize that the state's high-speed rail plans have run off the tracks.

**Editorial Board** [Riverside PE](#) – 01/09/12

### **End the high-speed rail**

To add an expensive and seemingly unneeded pie-in-the-sky project costing uncounted tens of billions of dollars on top of the already onerous debt burden facing taxpayers is irresponsible, bordering on cruel. Brown and the state Legislature need to get over their egos and do what's right for California by putting an end to the high-speed rail line.

**Editorial Board** [North County Times](#) -- 01/11/12

### **No special favors for California bullet train**

The governor's refusal to delay or kill the implausible train project should make taxpayers wary of a bill introduced last week by Assemblyman Mike Feuer, D-West Hollywood, to allow "public rail transit projects" to avoid rigorous environmental review.

**Editorial Board** [OC Register](#) – 01/12/12

### **Transportation done right**

Rather than spending an estimated \$100 billion (and growing) on an unneeded, unwanted rail line, the state should be spending its money as it did along the I-15 corridor ---- providing real, tangible transportation improvements to the people.

**Editorial Board** [North County Times](#) –

01/15/12

### **News**

#### **The Whip Snaps at High Speed Rail... and More**

For the man whose Central Valley hometown is supposed to be an anchor point in the first construction phase of high speed rail, Rep. Kevin McCarthy seems intent on doing everything he can do block the project.

**John Meyers** [KQED News](#) -- 01/09/12

#### **Tulare County supervisors unanimously oppose high-speed rail**

By taking a stand, the county joins Kings County and the city of Bakersfield in opposing the planned high-speed rail project from Los

Angeles to San Francisco via the Central Valley. **Lewis Griswold**  
[Fresno Bee](#) – 01/10/12

### **Proposal seeks high-speed rail jobs for people from high unemployment areas**

Since September, the Fresno Workforce Investment Board has pressed the California High-Speed Rail Authority to require that contractors on the train project hire at least 30 percent of their workers from areas of high unemployment. The local board also wants contractors to maintain a local hiring office in the valley. **Tim Sheehan** [Bakersfield Californian](#) -- 01/11/12

### **San Diego Assemblyman Calls High-Speed Rail A Fantasy Train**

Republican Martin Garrick represents the 74th assembly district in north San Diego County. He is co-sponsoring a bill to put high-speed rail back on the ballot, so voters can change their minds. **Tom Fudge** [KPBS](#) – 01/11/12

### **Top bosses to leave High-Speed Rail Authority**

The top executive and top politician at the beleaguered California High-Speed Rail Authority both announced Thursday they are stepping down. Chief executive officer Roelof van Ark said he will resign in two months. Former Orange County Assemblyman Tom Umberg will step aside as chairman next month though he will remain on the board.

**Ronald Campbell** [OC Register](#) – 01/12/12

### **High-speed rail will stop in Lancaster, Palmdale, not Grapevine**

The California High Speed Rail Authority board announced today that a Los Angeles-to-San Francisco high-speed train would run north to Bakersfield through the Antelope Valley cities of Palmdale and Lancaster, and not along an alternate proposed route near the Grapevine.

**Daily News Wire Services** [LA Daily News](#) -- 01/12/12

### **Bumpy ride for California's high-speed rail effort**

Jerry Brown wants to move forward with building a statewide high-speed rail system seen costing nearly \$100 billion, but lawmakers are nervous about approving bonds needed to lock in federal funds to get the project under way. **Jim Christie** [Reuters](#) – 01/13/12

### **Brown suggests revamp for Calif. high-speed rail**

The Democratic governor told reporters that he will not join the "defeatist crowd" that thinks the project is impossible. He says he will listen to critics and "do the right thing." **Juliet Williams** [AP](#) – 01/13/11

### **Brown enlarges his role in California's foundering bullet train project**

A surprise shake-up of senior leaders at California's bullet-train agency this week was partly Gov. [Jerry Brown](#)'s response to a growing crisis of confidence and credibility in recent months that has threatened the political viability of the project. **Ralph Vartabedian & Dan Weikel** [LAT](#) -- 01/14/12

### **Plans for high-speed rail are slowing down**

Since then, things have only gotten worse. Spiraling cost estimates and eroding political and public support now threaten a project crucial to a 21st-century vision of train travel that President Obama [promised](#) would transform U.S. transportation much as interstate highways did more than a half-century ago. **Michael A. Fletcher** [Washington Post](#) – 01/15/12

### **Work on state's high-speed rail could start this year**

Work could begin late this year in Fresno on the first section between Merced and Bakersfield, described by planners as the backbone of the statewide system and scorned by others as a route unlikely to see many passengers. **Tim Sheehan** [California Watch](#) – 01/15/12

## Op-Eds

### **Scrap rail project to save big bucks**

No matter where you stand on Brown's proposed new taxes and state cuts, few people (except for Brown himself and the High-Speed Rail Authority Board of Directors) think the rail project is a good idea. Frankly, it is a complete waste of money at a time when we don't have money to waste. **Robin Miller** [Vacaville Reporter](#) – 01/08/12

### **All High Speed Rail Programs Must be Cancelled and the Numbers Calculated Again**

There are a number of proposals for high speed rail lines floating around at the moment. In the UK we've got HS2, California seems to be building one between two rural villages (although obviously the stated intention is to connect LA and SF) and there are those who agitate for more high speed rail right across the country. **Tim Worstall** [Forbes](#) -- 01/08/12

### **California's high-speed rail to nowhere**

It's especially odd for a Democratic president and governor to saddle California with the cost of bullet trains when the state is facing chronic deficits, tax increases and social spending cuts. Maybe this is why polls show that a majority of Californians have turned against the project. It's still not too late to hit the brakes. **Charles Lane** [Washington Post](#) – 01/09/12

### **California's High-Speed Rail Fibs**

A few days ago, the California High Speed Rail Peer Review Group, an expert body mandated by state law, expressed serious doubts about the proposed Los Angeles-San Francisco rail system. But hell hath no fury like a state agency scorned. **Wendell Cox & Joseph Vranich** [WSJ](#) (subscription) – 01/10/12

### **High-speed rail meets roadblocks**

Concerns about the feasibility of funding California's high-speed rail (HSR) project led a peer review group [to conclude](#) last Tuesday that the state legislature should not approve the release of billions of dollars of state bond money to fund the first phase of construction. **Jamie Kim** [Stanford Daily](#) -- 01/10/12

### **Pull brake on HSR project**

Four years ago, I wrote a column promoting California's high-speed rail project. I believed then, and I believe now, that linking cities throughout the Golden State with a bullet train that travels from San Francisco to Los Angeles in two hours will provide tremendous economic benefits. Unfortunately, a lot has happened with HSR that has tarnished much of my optimism for the project. In four years, HSR has more than doubled in estimated costs. **Martin Cheek** [Gilroy Dispatch](#) -- 01/10/12

### **High-speed Rail to Nowhere**

The Washington Post's Charles Lane has [a really good yet infuriating piece](#) today on California's high-speed rail project. As you know, the Golden State has been pushing, at the encouragement of the federal government, an increasingly expensive high-speed-rail project.

**Veronique de Rugy** [National Review](#) – 01/10/12

### **Invest in interregional rail**

As an example of that, our Regional Council this month authorized me to request that the rail authority include, in its Draft Business Plan, a commitment to investing in speed, capacity and service improvements within existing interregional commuter rail services. **Hasan Ikhrata** [SB Sun](#) -- 01/11/12

### **High-Speed Rail Not Just a Boondoggle, It's a Big Labor Boondoggle**

What few people realize is that among the many pro-union Bills signed by Governor Brown last year is [Assembly Bill 1254](#) which calls for at least 25% of the rail construction to be completed using union-only

Project Labor Agreements, which lockout non-union firms from the bidding process by requiring all workers on the job to pay union dues and pay into union pension and medical programs. **Kevin Korenthal** [Flashreport](#) -- 01/12/11

## **Video**

### **Lawmaker calls high-speed rail project a lemon**

The latest controversy over high-speed rail could put the issue before voters for a second time. This vote would take away the bond money Californians approved for the project four years ago. "Voters believe they bought a lemon," said Assm. Diane Harkey, R-Dana Point. **Nanette Miranda** [ABC 30 Fresno](#) – 01/10/12

### **What California can learn from Spain's high-speed rail**

This is the vision shared by backers of California's proposed, but controversial, high-speed rail system. And there are lessons -- from both successes and mistakes -- that California can learn from Spain's 20-year history with high-speed trains. Top among them is just how hard it is to be self-sufficient, even when conditions seem ideal, as they have in Spain. **Tim Sheehan** [Fresno Bee](#) – 01/14/12

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