



NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

RCTC Certifies Environmental Document for the Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Program

Passenger rail service proposed between Los Angeles and the Coachella Valley took another step forward with the Riverside County Transportation Commission's (RCTC) unanimous certification of its "program level" environmental document today.

Since 2016, RCTC, the Federal Railroad Administration, and Caltrans have been studying ways to expand travel choices through passenger rail between L.A. and the Coachella Valley. Today, RCTC certified the Final Tier 1 Program Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the [Coachella Valley-San Gorgonio Pass Rail Corridor Service Program](#) following a public hearing that was held as part of today's Commission meeting.

The EIS/EIR studied and documented potential environmental impacts of operating passenger rail service in the corridor. Certification of the EIS/EIR will not lead to immediate construction and operations; additional Tier 2 or "project level" environmental review is needed before construction may begin. The certification of the EIS/EIR is considered a major milestone as it allows more in-depth Tier 2 "project level" environmental studies to proceed.

"Every day, the project is closer to becoming a reality as an alternative to driving to and from the Coachella Valley," said RCTC 1st Vice Chair and Lake Elsinore Councilmember Bob Magee. "With the help

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of our state and federal partners, we continue to take steps toward service that will help our disadvantaged residents expand their travel and employment options, improve air quality for our region, and boost tourism and our desert economy,” he said.

The service is envisioned to begin with twice-daily passenger rail roundtrips between Los Angeles Union Station and the Coachella Valley. The 144-mile corridor would include stops in Los Angeles, Orange, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties. Existing rail stations in Los Angeles, Fullerton and Riverside would be part of the rail line, the existing station in Palm Springs would be improved for use, and up to five new stations could be built east of Colton with a service endpoint in Coachella.

Once running, the service would offer another transportation option, serve residential and job centers along the corridor, enhance access to Coachella Valley destinations and boost economic development from the tourism industry, reduce vehicle miles traveled on Interstate 10 and other major highways, and improve air quality, especially in disadvantaged communities that parallel highways.

Work on the Tier 1 program-level environmental studies began in 2016. Last summer, the agencies released the draft environmental document for public review. During the 45-day public comment period, RCTC received 307 comments from public agencies, organizations, and individuals through multiple methods, including two virtual public hearings. The majority of comments received supported the program.

With today's certification of the Tier 1 program-level environmental document, RCTC is positioned to start work on Tier 2 project-level environmental studies when funding becomes available. These studies would perform an in-depth analysis of required infrastructure improvements and station locations.

RCTC is actively working with state and federal partners to secure \$60 million for this next phase. Last year, RCTC received close to \$25 million from the State's Regional Transportation Improvement Program, and U.S. Senator Alex Padilla is pursuing \$5 million through the House Appropriations Committee Community Project Funding process. Ongoing support from stakeholder partners will help deliver this transformative project.

Videos, b-roll footage, the project logo, and English and Spanish fact sheets are available for [download](#).