



736 F Street  
Arcata, CA 95521

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December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2017

California Department of Transportation (CalTrans)  
Division of Rail and Mass Transportation  
2018 California State Rail Plan  
Rail Planning Branch  
1120 N Street, MS 74  
Sacramento, CA 95814

To Whom It May Concern:

The City of Arcata thanks you for the opportunity to comment on the 2018 California State Rail Plan. The City has actively been working to reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions locally. A significant part of our community's emissions is generated from the transportation sector, both freight and passenger transportation.

The 2018 California State Rail Plan presents a vision for expansion and development of the rail transportation system in California through 2040.

With respect to rail, public attention has primarily been focused on High-Speed Rail and its potential environmental benefits. However, freight rail in California contributes much greater greenhouse gas emissions than passenger rail, and offers much greater opportunities for reductions in greenhouse gas emissions.

Shipping freight by rail is already much more energy efficient than shipping freight by truck and, as a result, has much lower greenhouse gas emissions. However, with rare exceptions, all freight rail in California is powered by diesel-electric hybrid locomotives which make a significant contribution to California greenhouse gas emissions.

Current state law requires that 50% of electricity in California be produced from qualified renewable sources by 2030. SB100, which is currently under consideration by the state legislature, would require that the state produce 100% of its electricity from renewable sources by 2050.

The draft 2018 state rail plan is only proposing that the High-Speed Rail and CalTrain (San Francisco, Gilroy) routes be electrified, and that other routes begin to use low-carbon fuels which would continue to have substantial greenhouse gas emission.

In line with the state's renewable electricity goals and in recognition that electricity will become increasingly clean in California, we are proposing a realistic, but more ambitious goal, that the state of California set requirements that by 2040 all rail transportation be electrified.

Electrified rail is already widely used throughout the world, both for freight and passengers. This is especially true in Europe. A promising technology for use during the transition to electrified rail is the dual-mode hybrid, which uses grid electricity when it is available and the diesel engine otherwise.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electro-diesel\\_locomotive](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Electro-diesel_locomotive)

The bottom line is that greater use of rail and electrification of rail provide great opportunities for California to reduce its transportation-greenhouse gas emissions.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments as you finalize your plan.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Susan Ornelas". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Susan" and last name "Ornelas" clearly distinguishable.

Susan Ornelas, Mayor  
City of Arcata