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SURVEY FINDS STRONG SUPPORT FOR HIGH-SPEED RAIL

Findings Bolster Effort to Attract Federal and Private Investment

SACRAMENTO - In the first gauge of public opinion since voters approved a 2008 bond measure, a survey released today shows that clear majority of Californians support the state's high-speed train project, with more than three-quarters saying they would like the project to be built.

Some 76 percent of Californians indicated support for the project, with 34 percent saying they would like to see the project move forward "as quickly as possible," 42 percent saying they would like to see the high-speed trains built despite some concerns over cost and timing, and only 13 percent indicating opposition to the project.

"Californians are telling us loudly and clearly that they support the state's high-speed rail project, and that's the message we will be delivering in Washington this week to the Administration and the Congressional leadership," said Curt Pringle, Chairman of the California High Speed Rail Authority.

The survey, carried out in May as part of the project's outreach efforts by two California research firms, Fairbank, Maslin, Maullin, Metz & Associates and Public Opinion Strategies, included telephone interviews with 800 registered voters in California. The results have a margin of sampling error of +/- 3.5 percent.

The survey also found that a large majority of Californians who travel long-distance would prefer to travel by high-speed train. More than seven out of ten long-distance travelers said they would prefer to take the high-speed rail line after being informed that a trip between San Francisco and Los Angeles was likely to cost less than an airline ticket or than travel by car, while being more environmentally friendly.

Though challenges will accompany any project of this magnitude, voters don't see them as a reason to delay the project. Nearly twice as many voters indicated that the benefits of the train make it worth moving forward with the investment now, as opposed to delaying based on uncertainties about costs, ridership or environmental benefits.

The findings were presented in a detailed report by the two firms. Authority officials will share the survey's findings with federal officials and Congressional leaders over two days of meetings starting Wednesday.

"It's critical that we be able to show federal officials - as well as our potential partners in the private sector - that Californians remain firmly in support of the high-speed train project," Pringle said. "These results demonstrate that support, and show that the more Californians know about this project, the stronger their commitment to it. That's gratifying to see - and it underscores the importance of ensuring that every Californian remains informed about this historic project."

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Contact:

Rachel Wall
rwall@hsr.ca.gov
