

MEMORANDUM

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS
CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CTC Meeting: May 14-15, 2026

From: STEVEN KECK, Chief Financial Officer

Reference Number: 2.8d.(12), Action Item

Prepared By: Jeffrey Wyly, Chief (Acting)
Division of Mass Transportation

Subject: **REQUEST TO EXTEND THE PERIOD OF PROJECT DEVELOPMENT
EXPENDITURE FOR A TRANSIT AND INTERCITY RAIL CAPITAL PROGRAM
COMPONENT, PER TIRCP ALLOCATION POLICY
WAIVER 26-88**

ISSUE:

Should the California Transportation Commission (Commission) extend the period of project development expenditure for the Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program (TIRCP) (2023:09) High Desert Intercity High-Speed Rail Corridor Preliminary Engineering (High-Speed Rail Corridor) component (PPNO CP115), in various counties, for the time period as identified in the attachment?

RECOMMENDATION:

The California Department of Transportation recommends that the Commission extend the period of project development expenditure for the TIRCP (2023:09) High Desert Intercity High-Speed Rail Corridor Preliminary Engineering (High-Speed Rail Corridor) component (PPNO CP115), in various counties, for the time period as identified in the attachment.

BACKGROUND:

In December 2023, the Commission allocated \$8,000,000 for the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase of the TIRCP (2023:09) High Desert Intercity High-Speed Rail Corridor Preliminary Engineering (High-Speed Rail Corridor) component (PPNO CP115). The local agency is unable to complete the PA&ED phase per the Timely Use of Funds (TUF) policy.

The current TIRCP Allocation Policy stipulates that the agency implementing a project component request a time extension if the project component will not be completed within the specified timeline. Under the TUF policy, an extension can be requested for up to 20 months for each delivery milestone, where permissible by statute. The attachment describes the details of the component and the explanation for the delay.

Attachment

**Time Extension/Waiver – Project Development Expenditure
Transit and Intercity Rail Capital Program**

Project Number: 1
Applicant: High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Agency
County: Various
District: 07
PPNO: CP115
Allocation Amount: \$8,000,000
Remaining Balance: \$8,000,000
Phase: Project Approval and Environmental Document
Allocation Date: 12/07/2023
Allocation Resolution: TIRCP-2324-32
Number of Months Requested: 20 Months
Extended Deadline: 02/29/2028
Department Recommendation: Support

**(2023:09) High Desert Intercity High-Speed Rail Corridor Preliminary Engineering
(High-Speed Rail Corridor)**

The High Desert Corridor Joint Powers Agency (HDCJPA) is requesting a 20-month time extension for the period of project development expenditure for the Project Approval and Environmental Document (PA&ED) phase of the TIRCP (2023:09) High Desert Intercity High-Speed Rail Corridor Preliminary Engineering (High-Speed Rail Corridor) component. HDCJPA has experienced delays in completing the PA&ED phase of the component.

The purpose of this component is to advance the design of the High Desert Intercity High-Speed Rail Corridor project. This component proposes to achieve environmental clearance and finalize 30 percent of the preliminary engineering work and initial design. This effort will further refine project scope, improve cost estimates, and reduce overall project risks. Advancing to this level of design will also position the project for future funding opportunities and accelerate readiness for final design and construction phases.

The HDCJPA experienced delays due to National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approvals being slower than anticipated. At the time of allocation, completion of NEPA approvals and the environmental phase were anticipated by the end of 2025. HDCJPA encountered delays through the NEPA process due to a September 2025 decision by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) to delegate authority to the California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) as the NEPA lead agency, and additional environmental efforts and technical analysis are required.

Additionally, HDCJPA anticipated going through the FRA for NEPA approval and worked with FRA to advance NEPA efforts. The change in federal administration resulted in additional delays in advancing the high-speed rail project. The HDCJPA is working closely with CHSRA

to develop technical studies and impact analysis, perform surveys, and coordinate with cooperating and participating agencies to complete the NEPA re-evaluation and obtain a Record of Decision.

HDCJPA has established a NEPA delivery schedule which shows that NEPA approval is currently anticipated in December 2026. HDCJPA will need an additional two months beyond December 2026 to address any comments and complete PA&ED activities.

Therefore, HDCJPA is requesting a 20-month time extension for the period of project development expenditure for the PA&ED phase from June 30, 2026 to February 29, 2028.