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## *Memorandum*

TO: Commission

DATE: October 15, 2007

FR: Deputy Executive Director, Policy

RE: California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement: Transmit Comments, *MTC Resolution No. 3829*

On October 12, 2007 the Planning Committee unanimously agreed to forward Resolution No. 3829 (attached) to the Commission for adoption, which authorizes the Executive Director or his designee to transmit MTC's comments on the CHSRA's Draft Environmental Impact Report/Statement. The PowerPoint presentation made to the Planning Committee is attached for information of the full Commission.

The Planning Committee agreed to two changes to the comments staff recommended be forwarded to the Commission as follows:

1. Recommendation # 1 – Support building a statewide high speed rail (HSR) system – adds language that recognizes HSR can also reduce greenhouse gas emissions.
2. Recommendation # 4 – Endorse improvements to the Altamont route to serve interregional and local travel between the Bay Area and Northern San Joaquin County – adds language that “supports electrification of the ACE line once the Union Pacific Railroad track has been acquired”.

In addition, Commissioner Chu asked about: (1) the ability of MTC to make a high speed rail alignment recommendation if that recommendation is not consistent with any alignment already studied by the CHSRA, and (2) whether the CHSRA can consider MTC's recommendation without having to conduct more environmental review.

In response, the Commission's recommendation is a public comment, submitted within the extended comment period set by the CHSRA. While MTC staff believes that the Resolution No. 3829 recommendation to support both alignments is consistent with combined Altamont and Pacheco options that have been evaluated in the DEIS/DEIR, it will be up to the CHSRA as to how it wants to address MTC's recommendation, just as the CHSRA has to consider all other public comments it has or will receive. Ultimately, it will be the CHSRA's decision whether additional supplemental environmental work is necessary after it selects a preferred alternative.

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Therese McMillan

TMC: DK

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