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Preserving habitat and watershed resources

March 11, 2020

To the California High Speed Rail Authority, Mr. Simon, Ms. Rosenson, and Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your gracious invitation to the Antelope Valley Conservancy, to meet with the High Speed Rail Authority's technical personnel to discuss the High Speed Rail (HSR) route alignment in south Palmdale.

In preparation for the meeting, Antelope Valley Conservancy (AVC) asked to receive the Authority's plan for the HSR alignment, from where the HSR enters south Palmdale northward to Avenue S. Regrettably, the maps and descriptions provided to AVC in November 2019 did not identify which portions of the High Speed Rail route in south Palmdale will be ground-level, tunneled, or elevated, how the proposed route will intersect with or bypass existing railway lines, the California Aqueduct, the San Andreas Fault, Una Lake, the lands east of Una Lake, or the existing roads and residences in southern Palmdale.

Palmdale Deputy City Manager Mike Behen has suggested that the Authority now has a working plan that addresses those intersects, which he hopes the Authority will share with AVC and incorporate concerns, if any, prior to the issuance of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for the south Palmdale route. He would like to attend the meeting with AVC and hopes that HSR Project Manager Rick Simon will attend as well.

AVC has a significant interest in any potential impacts to the area because AVC has made extensive efforts over the years, and garnered state and federal funding, to secure the preservation of Una Lake and the rift zone complex of wetland areas that extend eastward along the San Gabriel Mountains north slope. In 2018, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the Wildlife Conservation Board approved *the Rift Zone Wetlands Complex Conceptual Area Preservation Plan (CAPP)*, coordinated by AVC and funded by California Proposition funding.

The vitality and importance of the area for habitat and wildlife dispersal is also documented in adopted habitat management plans including:

- **Common Ground North Slope Plan**, California Resources Agency;
- **Green Visions Plan**, *Terrestrial Target Species for Habitat Conservation Planning*, California Resources Agency, supporting habitat for focal species;

- **Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan**, California Desert Biological Conservation Framework; and the
- **San Andreas Rift Zone Significant Ecological Area**, (SEA) designated within the Los Angeles County General Plan for significant importance to the flora and fauna of the county, due to unique communities for a number of state- and federally-listed species.

Founded in 2005, the Antelope Valley Conservancy is a California public benefit corporation with the mission of preserving and stewarding native habitat lands for the public benefit, qualified to hold conservation easements pursuant to Civil Code Section 815.3, and granted authority to hold mitigation lands by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife under Code Section 65965 since 2008. The Antelope Valley Conservancy has fulfilled preservation, restoration, and advisory projects for state, county and local agencies as well as private landowners.

We look forward to hearing from you.

By Resolution of the  
ANTELOPE VALLEY CONSERVANCY

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Andrews", is written over the printed name of the Secretary.

Attested by Christina Andrews, Secretary

Attachment 1:  
Partial list of Fauna of the Rift Zone CAPP

**Attachment 1. Partial list of fauna of the Rift Zone CAPP**

<b>Fauna</b>	<b>Species</b>
Small mammals	Antelope ground squirrel ( <i>Ammospermophilus leucurus</i> ), California ground squirrel ( <i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i> ), Audubon's cottontail ( <i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i> ), black-tailed jackrabbit ( <i>Lepus californicus</i> ), desert kit fox ( <i>Vulpes macrotis macrotis</i> ), bobcat ( <i>Felis rufus</i> ), coyote ( <i>Canis latrans</i> ), and American badger ( <i>Taxidea taxus</i> ) western pipistrelle bats ( <i>Pipistrellus hesperus</i> ) and California myotis ( <i>Myotis californicus</i> ), Big eared ( <i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i> ), Pallid ( <i>Antrozus pallidus</i> ) bats
Reptiles and amphibians	Side-blotched lizard ( <i>Uta stansburiana</i> ), desert spiny lizard ( <i>Sceloporus magister</i> ), and Pacific treefrog ( <i>Pseudacris regilla</i> ), King snakes
Aquatic habitat birds	California quail ( <i>Callipepla californica</i> ), Northern harrier ( <i>Circus cyaneus</i> ), Red-tailed hawk ( <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i> ), Western meadowlark ( <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> ), Wage sparrow ( <i>Amphispiza bellii</i> ), Yellow warbler ( <i>Dendroica petechia</i> ), Tricolored blackbird ( <i>Agelaius tricolor</i> ), White-faced ibis ( <i>Plegadis chihi</i> ), Oak titmouse ( <i>Baeolophus inornatus</i> ), Merlin ( <i>Falco columbarius</i> ), Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> ), Lark Sparrow, Loggerhead shrike, Marsh Wren, Northern Harrier, Redwinged Blackbird/Tricolored Blackbird, Sage Sparrow, White-tailed Kite
Migratory bird species	Yellow-rumped warbler ( <i>Denroica coronata</i> ), White-crowned sparrow ( <i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i> ), Wuby-crowned kinglet ( <i>Regulus calendula</i> ), Western tanager ( <i>Piranga ludoviciana</i> ), Bullock's oriole ( <i>Icterus bullockii</i> ), Black-headed grosbeak ( <i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i> )
Large mammals	Mountain lion ( <i>Felis concolor</i> ), Bobcat, Brown bear