



PROFESSIONAL ENGINEERS



IN CALIFORNIA GOVERNMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
May 10, 2011

CONTACT:
Lisa Marie Burcar
Ryan Endean
916-446-0400

PECG SUPPORTS LAO RECOMMENDATIONS TO PUT HIGH-SPEED RAIL BACK ON TRACK

SACRAMENTO, Calif. – The Legislative Analyst’s Office (LAO) has concluded that the California High-Speed Rail Authority has made “risky decisions” based on “faulty assumptions” that have led to an “infeasible” initial high-speed rail segment. Citing lack of accountability, structural weaknesses, inadequate monitoring, excessive reliance on consultants, and payments for invoices without verifying the work was actually performed, the LAO has recommended that the Legislature shift the responsibility for the high-speed rail project to Caltrans.

Professional Engineers in California Government (PECG) agrees with and supports this recommendation.

“The LAO reports that there is one public servant for every 33 outside consultants on the high-speed rail project”, said PECG President Matt Hanson. “The High-Speed Rail Authority is spending \$426,630 per year for each and every engineering consultant while the cost of a Caltrans engineer is just \$113,000, including pay, benefits and overhead. This wasteful overspending on consultants has to stop.”

The LAO report concluded that assigning Caltrans responsibility for the project is “the best choice” because of Caltrans’ “decades of experience in delivering large transportation infrastructure projects” with a “large complement of engineering staff in place.” Caltrans would also be better equipped to integrate the high-speed rail projects into the State’s transportation system.

“It’s time to stop wasting money, assign high speed rail to a department which has delivered 1,391 of its 1,394 projects on time in the last five years, and get this project back on track at a time when federal funding has provided the opportunity to start building high-speed rail lines in California” said Hanson.

ABOUT PECG

PECG represents 13,000 state-employed engineers and related professionals responsible for designing and inspecting California’s highways and bridges, ensuring that schools and hospitals are safe during earthquakes, and protecting our air, water and beaches from polluters.

HEADQUARTERS: 455 Capitol Mall, Suite 501, Sacramento, CA 95814 • (916) 446-0400
LOS ANGELES: 130 N. Brand Boulevard, Suite 301, Glendale, CA 91203 • (818) 500-9941
SAN FRANCISCO: 1 Sutter Street, Suite 800, San Francisco, CA 94104 • (415) 861-5720
TELEFAX: Headquarters (916) 446-0489; Los Angeles (818) 247-2348; San Francisco (415) 861-5360