



Betty T. Yee

California State Controller

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CA Controller Appoints Longtime Caltrans Engineer to High-Speed Rail Authority Peer Review Group

SACRAMENTO — State Controller Betty T. Yee today appointed a new member to the group that reviews planning, engineering, and financial plans for the nation's first high-speed rail system.

Mark Leja, a civil engineer and 30-year veteran of the California Department of Transportation, is Controller Yee's second of two appointments to the California High-Speed Rail Authority (HSRA) Peer Review Group (PRG). The PRG has eight members with various areas of expertise established by statute. The Controller selected Leja for his decades of experience engineering and building large infrastructure projects.

"The peer review group will play an important role in ensuring the success of high-speed rail and protecting Californians' investment in this important project," said Yee, the state's chief fiscal officer. "Mr. Leja has the deep expertise and commitment to California's transportation infrastructure that will serve this panel and California taxpayers well."

Leja, who retired from Caltrans in December, began his career there in 1984 – not long after earning his degree in civil engineering from San Diego State University. He spent the last seven years serving as Chief of the Division of Construction, and the previous four years as Chief of the Division of Design. In his role as construction chief, Leja oversaw completion of more than 4,300 projects valued at over \$23 billion. He previously served as Acting Chief Financial Officer at Caltrans, giving him wide-ranging perspective in design, engineering, and finance of major infrastructure projects.

HSRA business plans to be reviewed by PRG include estimates of capital costs, service levels, operating and maintenance costs, and environmental review schedules. PRG also plays a key role in reviewing estimates of anticipated funds, private and public funding agreements, potential impediments to completion, reasonably foreseeable risks and mitigation strategies, and HSRA funding plans prior to certain appropriation requests.

Yee appointed Martin Wachs, a civil engineer and transportation researcher, to the PRG in April.

By 2029, the high-speed rail system is slated to run from San Francisco to the Los Angeles basin in less than three hours, reaching speeds of more than 200 miles per hour. The system eventually will extend to Sacramento and San Diego, totaling 800 miles with up to 24 stations. Developing the first segment of the Initial Operating Section (IOS) from Madera to Bakersfield will cost \$6 billion, consisting of \$3.3 billion in federal funding and \$2.6 billion in bond proceeds from Proposition 1A of 2008. The remaining portions of the IOS will be funded using state bonds, federal support, and other state and local funds.

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