



## ***NEWS RELEASE***

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### **Governor Signs Valley Link Legislation**

**LIVERMORE, CA, September 23, 2021** – On Wednesday, September 22, 2021, Governor Gavin Newsom signed Senate Bill 548 into law. SB548 designates the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority (Authority) as a Rail Transit District, exempting the Authority from various provisions related to regulation by counties and cities regarding building, zoning, and related matters. The legislation also clarifies that the Authority can operate Valley Link – the passenger rail service it is planning, developing and delivering. Finally, the legislation establishes that the Valley Link project may be planned to connect with the ACE rail system at its most optimal location. SB 548 was unanimously approved by both the Senate and Assembly before moving to the Governor for consideration.

Veronica Vargas, Mayor Pro Tem in the City of Tracy and Chair of the Authority Board said, “I want to thank lead author State Senator Susan Eggman for introducing this important legislation and for all of her efforts that ensured its passage. I also want to thank co-authors State Senator Glazer and Assemblymembers Rebecca Bauer-Kahan and Carlos Villapudua for their efforts. The legislation will enable fast and efficient project delivery for an urgently needed project that will fundamentally change the lives of more than 98,000 Bay Area workers who now commute daily through the Altamont Pass.”

Vargas further stated, “These ‘super commuters’ are spending up to 90 minutes each way as they travel from affordable housing in San Joaquin County to prevailing wage jobs throughout the Bay Area. This hurts our environment. It hurts our economy. And, this hurts our communities and our families.”

Melissa Hernandez, Mayor of Dublin, who serves as Vice Chair of the Authority Board said, “This is truly a significant step toward streamlining project delivery. Valley Link will not only connect people to work but also create jobs – an estimated 22,000 during construction, and when operational, support 400 jobs per year. It is vital to our economy given the recovery needs we are now facing.”

Valley Link is a passenger rail project that will close a critical gap by connecting residents in the San Joaquin Valley to the Bay Area BART system – linking nearly 500 miles of commuter and intercity rail with more than 130 stations throughout the Northern California Megaregion. The project will meet an urgent need to connect housing and people to high paying, prevailing wage jobs throughout the Bay Area. The project’s 74 daily round trips will serve an estimated 33,000 daily riders in 2040 – a reduction of 141 million vehicle miles traveled per year and up to 42,650 metric tons of GHG emissions. It will equitably serve communities and households with some of the state’s highest poverty rates – and provide a vital near-term link to the state’s emerging high-speed rail system and expansive Bay Area rail network.

### **More About the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority Valley**

The Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority was created by the California Legislature in 2017 with the passage of Assembly Bill 758, co-authored by Assemblymember Catharine Baker, R-San Ramon and Assemblymember Susan Eggman, D-Stockton. The Authority’s primary purpose is to plan, develop and deliver cost-effective transit connectivity between the San Joaquin Valley and the Bay Area.

The Authority is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by its 15-member agencies, including the Town of Danville, the cities of San Ramon, Dublin, Pleasanton, Livermore, Tracy, Manteca, Lathrop and Stockton, the Mountain House Community Services District, the counties of Alameda and San Joaquin, the Livermore Amador Valley Transit Authority (LAVTA), the San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART) and the Altamont Corridor Express (ACE).

The Valley Link project is a 42-mile, 7-station passenger rail project developed in partnership with its 15-member agencies to be responsive to the goals and objectives of the communities it will serve. The project will meet an urgent need to:

#### **Connect Housing, People and Jobs**

Connects the Megaregion’s workforce to affordable housing. More than 98,000 Bay Area workers living in San Joaquin County commute daily through the Altamont in their cars.

#### **Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Reduces greenhouse gas emissions by 32,220 to 42,650 metric tons by 2040.

#### **Serve Disadvantaged and Low-Income Communities and Households**

Promotes equity by serving four stations within areas designated as disadvantaged or within or near low-income communities.

#### **Create New Jobs and Promote Economic Recovery**

Provides an estimated 22,000 jobs during construction. When operational will support 400 jobs per year with labor income of over \$19 million per year and \$69 million in business sales annually.

Additional information on the Tri-Valley – San Joaquin Valley Regional Rail Authority is available on Authority’s website at [www.valleylinkrail.com](http://www.valleylinkrail.com).

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