



AFFILIATED AGENCIES

*Orange County
Transit District*

*Local Transportation
Authority*

*Service Authority for
Freeway Emergencies*

*Consolidated Transportation
Service Agency*

*Congestion Management
Agency*

April 19, 2024

Dr. Kate Huckelbridge
Executive Director
California Coastal Commission
455 Market Street, Suite 300
San Francisco, CA 94105

Via email: Kate.Huckelbridge@coastal.ca.gov

Subject: Path Forward for Immediate Actions to Protect Coastal Rail Infrastructure and Public Beach Access

Dear Dr. Huckelbridge:

Thank you for taking the time to meet with the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) team on April 16, 2024. It is encouraging that our agencies can align our respective missions to protect critical rail infrastructure and ensure coastal protection and public beach access. We appreciate the collaborative relationship we have developed with the California Coastal Commission (Commission) over the last several years as OCTA has faced multiple challenges related to climate changes affecting a seven-mile stretch of the State-sponsored Los Angeles-San Diego-San Luis Obispo (LOSSAN) Rail Corridor in south Orange County, resulting in impacts to critical infrastructure including suspension of state-sponsored intercity passenger rail service as well as Metrolink service and freight rail service.

I would like to provide a synopsis of the discussion at our April 16, 2024, meeting and look forward to partnering to address the various outstanding matters. We are encouraged by the Commission's understanding and support of OCTA's goal to protect the rail corridor from imminent threats of closure while considering sand as a project feature on a concurrent permit path. This approach would off-set any potential environmental impacts that could result from the placement of the riprap, and engineered revetment, as well as protective measures on the inland side of the track. Our proposal is to advance the protective measures and expedite the permitting process in anticipation of the 2024 winter storm season. We also appreciate the Commission's acknowledgment and understanding of the challenges that come with procuring, sourcing, and delivering sand to this area in a timely manner. Collectively, our agencies strive to both expedite the permit path to provide measures that would benefit the traveling public and provide access to a diminishing coastal resource in light of climate change affecting coastal erosion and accretion trends.

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OCTA looks forward to working closely with you and your team to accomplish the challenging tasks that are in front of us. Some of the outstanding items that will require focused meetings between our agencies include:

- a. Present updated concepts for reinforcement areas to the Commission as soon as possible, understanding that this is a dynamic situation
- b. Discuss approach to resolving purported “unpermitted rocks”
- c. Discuss remaining activities for the Cyprus Shore and Mariposa Emergency Coastal Develop Permits and opportunities to make localized mitigation rather than the generalized measures.
- d. Work toward a programmatic permit approach to maintain the rail line on an ongoing basis

Thank you for your leadership and solutions-oriented vision to align the common goals of our respective agencies to identify and implement expeditious solutions to protect critical coastal rail infrastructure while ensuring and enhancing coastal public access.

If you have questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at (714) 560-5741 or Dan Phu at (714) 560-5907.

Sincerely,



Kia Mortazavi
Executive Director

KM:dp

c: Karl Schwing, California Coastal Commission
Dani Ziff, California Coastal Commission
Dan Phu, OCTA



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April 9, 2024

Colonel Andrew J. Baker
District Comander, Los Angeles District
United States Army Corps of Engineers
915 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90017

Subject: Immediate Actions Needed on Orange County Transportation Authority's Coastal Rail Line

Dear Colonel Baker:

The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) appreciates the long-standing successful relationship with the Los Angeles District of the United States Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) office. In 2009, OCTA and USACE collaborated to implement the Water Resources Development Act agreement. This agreement culminated in a successful, first-of-its-kind, USACE-approved advanced mitigation permit for a complex program of freeway projects funded by Orange County's half-cent transportation sales tax, Measure M2. The agreement allowed OCTA to streamline the delivery of its projects, saving taxpayers dollars while allowing USACE to deliver an earlier and more comprehensive mitigation program. I am writing to seek your support in engaging in another collaboration to address risks to the integrity of vital rail infrastructure in our local coastal zone.

Over the last several years, OCTA has faced several challenges along a seven-mile stretch of the railroad in south Orange County, resulting in multiple passenger rail and freight service suspensions. OCTA owns approximately 40 miles of the rail line in Orange County that is part of the 351-mile Los Angeles – San Diego – San Luis Obispo Rail (LOSSAN) Corridor, which travels through a six-county coastal region in Southern California. As you may be aware, this rail line is part of the Strategic Rail Corridor Network. Furthermore, the LOSSAN Corridor is the second busiest intercity passenger rail corridor in the United States and the busiest state-supported Amtrak route as well as supporting supporting Class I railroad connections to the Port of San Diego.

In response to the risks facing our coastal infrastructure, OCTA has initiated a short/mid-term planning study to identify solutions to protect the railroad in place for the foreseeable future. There will be a companion long-term study to assess options such as relocation of the tracks. As a first step in the short/mid-term assessment, four critical areas have been identified that need immediate attention. As a last line of defense, some of the immediate solutions contemplated include the placement of riprap and engineered revetment to protect the railroad. In late March, OCTA staff met with USACE Regulatory and Civil Works staff to discuss streamlining opportunities to include sand replenishment as part of the solutions to address the

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need for immediate action. OCTA's goal for this recent meeting was to explore the potential to piggyback onto USACE's current sand nourishment project in the City of San Clemente by utilizing the same contractor and borrow site for additional sand. The feedback from the meeting was that such an approach was not viable. As a result, I would like an opportunity to discuss how OCTA and USACE can partner to expedite the regulatory permitting and approval processes for an independent project to place sand and riprap/engineered revetment along the critically threatened areas of this railroad to minimize risks of compromising the functionality of the rail corridor.

As part of the stakeholder engagement process with USACE, OCTA shared the initial riprap and engineered revetment concepts with your team. The feedback received from USACE staff indicates that sand nourishment is an important part of the immediate solution. Notwithstanding our ability to identify, permit, and procure a source site that can provide sufficient, suitable sand to protect the railroad, it is our coastal engineers' professional opinion that the riprap/engineered revetment must be part of the solution, along with an appropriate amount of sand. Our challenge will be to align the timeframes for revetment measures with sand nourishment efforts.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in identifying ways for us to again successfully partner and implement expeditious solutions to protect critical coastal rail infrastructure while accommodating current USACE requirements. If you have questions or need additional information please contact Kia Mortazavi, Executive Director, Planning, at (714) 560-5741.

Sincerely,



Darrell E. Johnson
Chief Executive Officer

DEJ:dp

c: The Honorable Mike Levin, U.S. House of Representatives
Tim Jackson, United States Army Corps of Engineers
Cori Farrar, United States Army Corps of Engineers
Susie Ming, United States Army Corps of Engineers
Doland Cheung, United States Army Corps of Engineers
Kia Mortazavi, OCTA