Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 19, 2011

The Honorable Gene L. Dodaro
Comptroller General of the United States
United States Government Accountability Office
441 G Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20548

Dear Mr. Dodaro,

We write to request the Government Accountability Office (GAO) conduct a study into the California High Speed Rail Project's viability and questionable ridership and costs projections.

Good stewardship of taxpayer dollars is a priority for us, and allowing the money of hard-working Americans to be wasted on a questionable project with many unanswered questions would be an abdication of our responsibilities as elected officials of the American people. The California High Speed Rail Project of today is vastly different from the one California voters narrowly approved in 2008. Since that vote, the cost of building the system has more than doubled, the timeline has been pushed back over a decade, and no private investment has occurred. Needless to say, the California High Speed Rail Authority's recently released business plan for the project only raises more questions and concerns.

On December 15, 2011, the House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee conducted a hearing on the California High Speed Rail Project. At this hearing, concerns were expressed over the management of the project and its exploding costs, construction delays, and viability, including if taxpayers would ultimately end up heavily subsidizing ticket prices to encourage ridership. To help answer questions about the project, Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy has introduced legislation (H.R. 3143) to require GAO to conduct a study of the California High Speed Rail Project. H.R. 3143 is working through the legislative process, but we specifically request the GAO conduct a study on the California High Speed Rail Project that includes the following:

- An assessment of the accuracy of the ridership projections by the California High Speed Rail Authority;
- An assessment of the amount of Federal or State funding that will be needed to complete the construction of the California High Speed Rail project;
- An assessment of the amount of Federal or State funding that will be needed annually for operation, maintenance, and debt amortization of the project;
- A comparison of the various total project costs for the California High Speed Rail Project and relative ticket prices for the project to be self sustaining without any government subsidies;
- A comparison of the cost of the California High Speed Rail Project to other modes of transportation, such as by locomotive, airplane, and car, available to travelers in California;

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- An assessment of any adverse economic impacts resulting from the eminent domain of private property for the project; and,
- A comparison of the California High Speed Rail Project costs and viability to other high speed rail projects in the U.S.

Thank you for your attention on this important matter. Please contact Rob McCarthy with Majority Whip Kevin McCarthy if you need any additional information.

Sincerely,

Kevin McCarthy
House Majority Whip

John Mica
Chairman
House Transportation and
Infrastructure Committee

Darrell Issa
Chairman
House Committee on Oversight and
Government Reform

Bill Shuster
Chairman
Subcommittee on Railroads, Pipelines
& Hazardous Materials

Brian Bilbray
Member of Congress

John Campbell
Member of Congress

Jeff Denham
Member of Congress

Duncan Hunter
Member of Congress

Tom McClintock
Member of Congress

Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

Gary Miller
Member of Congress

Howard P. "Buck" McKeon
Member of Congress