DEPARTMENT: Board of Supervisors

RECOMMENDED ACTION AND JUSTIFICATION:
Authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter requesting two voting memberships on the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee or no membership on the Committee. The San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee is considering granting Mariposa County an Associate Membership on the committee, but this type of membership does not have voting rights. It is critical that Mariposa County has two voting memberships on the committee to ensure that rail service in the valley will coordinate with current and future transportation methods into our foothill communities. Rather than accepting an associate membership, it is recommended that Mariposa County be granted voting membership or no membership. If the Board is unsuccessful in gaining voting membership a representative may still attend all committee meetings and provide comments on any item that is on the Committee’s agenda.

The next San Joaquin Rail Committee meeting is on March 8, 2007, and the letter can be delivered to the Committee at that time.

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY OF BOARD ACTIONS:
The Board adopted Resolution 07-20 authorizing the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign a letter requesting two voting memberships on the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee.

ALTERNATIVES AND CONSEQUENCES OF NEGATIVE ACTION:
Do not authorize the Chairman of the Board of Supervisors to sign the letter. Individual Board members may write their own letters.
COUNTY of MARIPOSA
P.O. Box 784, Mariposa, CA 95338 (209) 966-3222

JANET BIBBY, CHAIR
LYLE TURPIN, VICE CHAIR
BRAD ABORN
DIANNE A. FRITZ
BOB PICKARD

DISTRICT III
DISTRICT II
DISTRICT I
DISTRICT IV
DISTRICT V

MARIPOSA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTE ORDER

TO: SUPERVISOR ABORN
FROM: MARGIE WILLIAMS, Clerk of the Board

SUBJECT: B) Authorize the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to Sign a Letter Requesting two voting Memberships on the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee or no Membership on the Committee

RESOLUTION 07-80

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF MARIPOSA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

ADOPTED THIS Order on March 6, 2007

ACTION AND VOTE:

B) Authorize the Chair of the Board of Supervisors to Sign a Letter Requesting two voting Memberships on the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee or no Membership on the Committee

BOARD ACTION: Supervisor Aborn advised of efforts to get full voting membership on the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee; and he advised of his meeting with Lee Goldenberg from the Rail Committee and his recommendation to offer the County associate membership. Supervisor Aborn requested that the Board take action reiterating its request for two voting memberships on the Committee or the County would withdraw its application. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday. Discussion was held.

Input from the public was provided by the following:
Ruth Sellers commented on attending the Committee meeting on behalf of TIE (Transportation Involves Everyone) and agrees with not accepting anything less than full membership. She stated she feels that the Board should really take a hard look at the YARTS program and its record of service.
Jeanetta Phillips stated she agrees that the County needs to be a full voting member on the Committee, and she agrees that YARTS needs to be examined.
Dick Hutchinson, as a representative of the Merchants Group of town, stated they sent a letter to the Rail Committee supporting the County’s request for membership. He commented on the importance of the route from Merced to Yosemite. He noted that there were three buses that spun out and blocked Highway 120 the previous week due to the snow, and that would not have happened on Highway 140 due to the lower elevation. He noted that he feels that there needs to be more support that the rockslide is an emergency.
Leroy Radanovich, Tourism Director, commented on his attendance of meetings relative to the County’s request for membership on the Rail Committee. He noted that Highway 140 is considered to be the Amtrak corridor, and we have the only corridor of that nature. He advised of events that he is working on and coordinating with YARTS, Amtrak and VIA. He stated he does not feel that we should be shy about
asking for what we want. He stated the legislature did not provide for an associate membership, and that would require a change. He feels the County has a right to voting membership on this Committee.

Ken Gosting, TIE, presented information concerning the request and information relative to Amtrak services. He stated he felt that the Committee’s action on February 9th was not to prepare a position paper, but to check with counsel to see if there is anything that would prevent membership. He presented information on the formation of the Committee and addressed the differences between voting and associate membership. He stated he feels that if the corridor changes for the Amtrak connection to Yosemite, it could impact the financial support for YARTS.

Discussion was held relative to an option to request one voting membership versus two; and consideration of rewording the draft letter. Thomas P. Guarino, County Counsel, provided input; and advised that he would be willing to review the formation documents for the Rail Committee. (M)Aborn, (S)Fritz, to approve the draft letter as written, with the correction of a typographical error; died after the second was withdrawn following further discussion. Supervisor Pickard offered his assistance to help reword the draft letter to substantiate the County’s request. Supervisor Fritz advised that she would be willing to work with the County Administrative Officer and Supervisor Aborn to bring back a revised draft letter for consideration later in this meeting; and the Board concurred.

Ken Gosting provided additional input relative to the statutes that govern the Rail Committee.

The matter was continued to later in the meeting.

5:43 p.m. The Board reconvened and further discussion was held relative to the revised draft letter to the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee requesting two voting memberships on the Committee for the County. (M)Fritz, (S)Aborn, Res. 07-80 was adopted approving the letter as revised. There was no public input.

Chair Bibby read the letter into the record. Dick Hutchinson noted that they are planning to attend the Rail Committee meeting on Thursday with posters to support the County. Supervisor Aborn requested that the Board’s vote on this action be included with the letter. Ayes: Unanimous.

Cc: File
March 6, 2007

The Honorable Harvey Hall
Chairman, San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee
1501 Truxton Avenue
Bakersfield, California 93301

Dear Chairman Hall:

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors is requesting you and your committee's support in allowing Mariposa County two voting memberships on the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee. We believe Mariposa County will be an asset to the committee. This county has a long history of cooperation and collaboration with several of your current member counties regarding transportation and other issues.

It is our understanding that Caltrans staff will be submitting a position paper urging denial of our full membership and recommending an associate membership with no voting rights. We respectfully request that you not follow staff's recommendation. We understand the perceived difficulty in amending the bylaws as well as the precedent being set, however, given Mariposa County's unique role as a final destination for a significant number of rail patrons visiting Yosemite National Park; we believe that full membership is necessary and appropriate. An Associate Membership, without voting privileges, will not provide our county with a voice in any committee decisions. Unless afforded full membership, we may have to decline to accept.

Mariposa County has a strong interest in being a full participant in planning future growth. With improved ridership and circulation, we look forward to helping the committee meet our state's growing transportation needs.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please contact me if you have any questions and I look forward to receiving your decision.

Sincerely,

Janet Bibby

JANET BIBBY
Chairman

JB/mbh

bcc: Marjie Williams, Clerk of the Board
This is to certify that at its regular meeting of March 6, 2007, the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors took action by unanimous vote to approve the attached letter to the San Joaquin Valley Rail Committee concerning membership on the Committee.

Dated this 7th day of March 2007.

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MARGIE WILLIAMS
Clerk of the Board