

EDITORIAL

Wednesday October 8, 2008

Proposition 1A High-speed rail bond

YES, YES, YES

California hasn't taken on a major improvement to its public infrastructure in several generations, the last significant one being the construction of the California State Water Project back in the 1950s. But with the state's growing population and the travel penchant of its citizens, there will be dire consequences to ignoring the need for more and better transportation options.

The state has been studying and planning for the creation of a high-speed rail system for more than 10 years, and this is the moment for voters to make it a reality.

Proposition 1A is a \$9.95 billion bond measure. Combined with contributions from the federal government and private sector, the measure would fund the first leg of a system that would eventually stretch from Sacramento to San Diego. The train would carry people from downtown San Francisco to downtown Los Angeles in 2.5 hours for just \$55.

The benefits are overwhelming. High-speed rail works well in Asia and Europe, on a fraction of the energy used by cars and planes and with almost no emissions.

The system is projected to pay for itself within 20 years and then be a source of revenue for the state. And it would make trips directly from one city core to another, facilitating tourism and business trips without clogging our roads.

Unfortunately, the costs of not approving this measure are also huge: more congestion for road and air travelers, more freeway lanes, larger airports, dirtier air, and increased greenhouse-gas emissions. Building a high-speed rail system is something California can't afford not to do. Vote yes.