

# San Francisco Chronicle

## EDITORIAL

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### **Yes on Prop. 1A: A 21st century vision**

Beyond the crises of the moment are the challenges of the future. In the coming decades, California is facing the daunting prospect of population growth that is likely to overwhelm its existing transportation systems and complicate its ability to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions.

Proposition 1A would help address those issues by investing \$9.95 billion toward a zero-emissions, high-speed train network that would make it possible to get from downtown San Francisco to Los Angeles in 2 1/2 hours for a one-way fare of about \$55.

The project is expected to cost \$40 billion and take eight years to complete, according to proponents.

Opponents have seized on the understandable anxiety about a venture of this magnitude and have questioned everything from its cost projections to ridership estimates to its environmental benefits. In a meeting with our editorial board this week, they suggested the money would be better spent on relieving gridlock on regional roadways.

However, the fiscal safeguards on Prop. 1A were toughened substantially with the Legislature's recent passage of AB3034. It limited the amount of money that could be spent on administration or other items unrelated to construction. Also, construction could not begin on any segment of the project until it was certified that the funding for it had been secured. State funding would account for about half of the project; the balance would come from the federal government and private sources.

The passage of Prop. 1A would generate an estimated 160,000 construction-related jobs at a time when the state could use an economic stimulus. But its even greater long-term value to the state will be the economic and environmental benefits of connecting urban centers with growing inland cities that don't have major airports - and providing an alternative to the cattle-call flights between the Bay Area and Southern California.

Prop. 1A presents an ambitious vision that is well tailored to the state's transportation and environmental needs. We recommend its passage.