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COURT DISMISSES NEIGHBORHOOD GROUP'S CHALLENGES TO DELAY EXPO LINE

Phase 2 of the Expo Line Project from Culver City to Santa Monica takes another step forward as the Superior Court of the State of California for the County of Los Angeles rendered an important decision, officially dismissing challenges to the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR). In a decision issued February 22, 2011, Judge McKnew denied community group Neighbors for Smart Rail's Petition for Writ of Mandate which challenged the project's FEIR and proposed mitigation measures. This follows a tentative ruling issued in December, 2010.

This ruling confirms the Exposition Metro Line Construction Authority's (Expo Authority) confidence in the Phase 2 project's compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The alternative selected through the environmental review process is the result of many meetings and briefings with communities and key stakeholders, thousands of public comments, and reflects the highest standards for design, public safety and environmental protection.

The judge's decision dismissed each of Neighbors for Smart Rail's legal challenges to the FEIR including standards for conducting environmental review of the project's impacts; baseline data used in projecting future conditions surrounding impacts; cumulative impacts of traffic, parking, noise, air quality and other proposed corridor developments; selection of alternatives carried forward for study in the FEIR; and recirculation of the draft environmental impact report (DEIR) for review.

The Expo Authority looks forward to starting the design-build process on Phase 2, which is essential to the full realization of the entire project connecting downtown Los Angeles and Santa Monica. The Expo Line will bring greater mobility to the region by connecting the Westside to the region's existing rail network. The communities along this alignment have been traditionally underserved by public transportation and are among the most traffic-congested in the nation. Phase 1 of the Expo Line, between downtown Los Angeles and Culver City, is 86% complete and expected to partially open this fall.

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