

# Permit to Enter Process

## Private Property and Environmental Studies

Large infrastructure projects like California's high-speed rail program require significant planning, and certain requirements must be met during that process. These requirements include federal and state environmental laws and regulations that guide planners to look carefully at how the program might impact the environment. They must also find ways to reduce those impacts when possible. Environmental surveys measure potential program impacts and prepare potential mitigation strategies to address those impacts.

Planners must figure out how the high-speed rail program may potentially affect items ranging from biological and cultural materials to traffic to noise levels. To complete these surveys, California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) scientific experts will visit properties around the future high-speed rail alignment to conduct studies.

While many of these properties are privately owned, the Authority's experts still need to visit those properties to collect information and conduct the necessary studies. To gain access to privately-held properties, the Authority issues a Permit to Enter (PTE) form requesting access to the property. Once the PTE form is signed and returned, the Authority or its representatives will contact the property owner to arrange access.

Completing the environmental surveys is an important step in planning the high-speed rail program. Your help and permission to enter your property are important, and we appreciate your help.

The following Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) help explain the PTE process.

### **WHO IS THE CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY?**

The Authority is the state agency responsible for planning, designing, building and operating the first high-speed rail system in the nation.

### **WHY DOES THE AUTHORITY NEED TO CONDUCT ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES ON MY PROPERTY?**

Federal and state laws, such as the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), require the assessment of potential impacts to environmental resources when building new projects. These studies identify the potential presence of environmental resources and help to determine how to reduce and mitigate for negative impacts to them. These environmental studies may include surveying for or sampling archaeological, botanical and wildlife resources or conducting geologic tests to better understand soil conditions.



**DO ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES ON MY PROPERTY MEAN THE AUTHORITY WANTS TO ACQUIRE MY PROPERTY?**

Accessing your property to conduct environmental studies does not necessarily mean the Authority will want to acquire your property. Your property may be accessed for environmental study to help determine where environmental resources exist to determine the best possible alignment for the rail to pass/take through an area, or simply to learn the extent of a specific resource within the area. Please review the booklet, "Your Property, Your High-Speed Rail Project," online for more detailed information about the appraisal and acquisition processes, or call to request a copy.

**IF I AGREE TO LET EXPERTS FROM THE AUTHORITY ON TO MY PROPERTY, HOW WILL I KNOW WHEN THEY ARE COMING?**

After you provide the Authority with permission to access your property, the Authority will give a forty-eight (48) hour notice to each owner/operator of the property to notify the owner/operator that scientific experts will visit the property.

**CAN THE AUTHORITY ACCESS MY PROPERTY MORE THAN ONCE?**

The Authority may access your property on more than one occasion during the period set forth on the signed Permit to Enter (PTE) form. Each time the Authority plans to access your property, the Authority will provide you with notice at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance. If you have questions about the timeframe on the PTE form that you signed, please contact the Authority for assistance.

**WHAT WILL THE AUTHORITY'S EXPERTS DO WHEN THEY ARE ON MY PROPERTY?**

They will conduct surveys on your property of environmental resources to help determine how to reduce and plan for any potential impacts to your property from the high-speed rail program. These experts will NOT:

- ▶ Go inside your house or other structures. They will go only to outside areas like front and back yards.
- ▶ Alter or remove anything from the property.

**WHAT TYPE OF WORK MIGHT THE AUTHORITY NEED TO DO ON MY PROPERTY?**

The Authority's experts will conduct surveys that may include collecting cultural/biological plant material such as leaves and flowers, some hand digging of small soil pits and soil testing, drilling and/or trenching. As per all applicable rules and regulations, all excavated soils will be backfilled. Should intrusive investigations, such as drilling or trenching, be required, the Authority will work with you to determine the least impactful way to complete this work and will provide financial compensation when appropriate.

**CAN I GIVE SPECIAL CONDITIONS FOR ACCESSING MY PROPERTY?**

If you have any special conditions or instructions for the survey teams, or if you would like to be present while studies are performed, include your name, contact information and best time to contact you, along with any special instructions, on the PTE form that you return to the Authority.

**CAN I REFUSE TO ALLOW PLANNERS ACCESS TO MY PROPERTY?**

Yes. If you do not want planners accessing your property, mark your PTE form as "Do Not Enter" and return it to the Authority. Although Authority planners may be doing survey work in the area, they will not enter your property.

**WILL ENVIRONMENTAL DETAILS ABOUT MY PROPERTY BE MADE PUBLIC?**

Environmental studies build the environmental analysis included in Environmental Impact Reports/Environmental Impact Statements (EIR/EIS), which are provided for public review; however, property specific details are not specified in the greater context of the assessment summary. Other technical reports that may result from environmental studies are submitted to oversight agencies for review; however, property details, if specified, are redacted if the studies are made public.



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