

**CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

CENTRAL REGION

1234 EAST SHAW AVENUE

FRESNO, CALIFORNIA 93710



**AMENDMENT NO. 23**

(A Major Amendment)

California Endangered Species Act

Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2015-024-04

California High-Speed Train Project Fresno to Bakersfield Section Permitting Phase 1

**INTRODUCTION**

On June 15, 2015, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) issued Incidental Take Permit No. 2081-2015-024-04 (ITP) to the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority or Permittee) authorizing take of California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*), Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratooides nitratooides*), San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*), and San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) (collectively, the Covered Species) associated with and incidental to the Permitting Phase 1 of the Fresno to Bakersfield Section of the High-Speed Train (HST) Project (Project). The Project as described in the ITP originally issued by CDFW includes HST alignment beginning on the south side of the G Street and San Benito Street intersection, north of Highway 41, in the City of Fresno, Fresno County, California. From this intersection, the Fresno to Bakersfield HST alignment extends south either along or adjacent to the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway (BNSF) for approximately 99 miles before reaching the section endpoint, at the intersection of 7<sup>th</sup> Standard Road, and Santa Fe Way, within the city limits of Shafter, in Kern County, California.

The total length of the Project is 99 miles. The Project is the second of the nine California HST sections to be constructed; each section will function independently, but once joined together will create a statewide HST system. The HST will be an electrically powered with steel-wheel-on-steel-rail technology and state-of-the-art safety, signaling, and automated train-control systems. The trains will be capable of operating at speeds of up to 220 miles per hour (mph) over a fully graded, separated, dedicated track alignment. The Project will be built using a design/build (D/B) approach, a method of construction by which one D/B contractor works under a single contract with the Permittee to provide design and construction services. The Project as originally permitted in the ITP included construction and installation of all Project components, including disturbance of up to 5,868.00 acres (hereafter, Construction Footprint). Construction may occur at any point along the Construction Footprint, and construction may occur at multiple locations simultaneously. The Project also includes operations,

maintenance, inspection activities within the Construction Footprint (O&M), and Mitigation Activities.

In an email dated June 24, 2016, the Permittee requested a revision of the Project Description to include an increase in the Construction Footprint by 102.58 acres to 5,970.58 acres to accommodate eight additional Roadway Modifications, and in a subsequent email dated July 25, 2016, the Permittee requested the addition of a third designation of approvable project biologists to carry out small mammal habitat assessment and trapping activities. On March 7, 2017, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 1** to the ITP incorporating these requested revisions along with corrections to the acreage for the impacts, changes to the required Habitat Management lands acreage, and clarifications to the reporting requirement language.

On July 5, 2018 and September 19, 2018, CDFW initiated, issued, and re-issued respectively, **Major Amendment No. 2** to the ITP incorporating a Baseline Map Book as Exhibit 6 and added references to the map book throughout the ITP; further revising the Tracking Suitable Habitat Feature Disturbances, Map Updating, and Reporting requirements; added a specific Covered Activity (pile driving) and a species-specific Take Avoidance Measure for that Covered Activity; adding the third category of Biological Monitor, Designated Small Mammal Trapper, to Condition of Approval 6.2; clarified the Construction Monitoring Notebook requirement; added Condition of Approval 7.13 requiring survey and reporting requirements in advance of initiating Covered Activities; revising Conditions of Approval 8.13.2, 8.14.1, 8.15.1, 8.16.1, 8.16.2, 8.16.3, 8.17.2; and adding Condition of Approval 8.15.6. There was no change to the Construction Footprint acreage.

In a letter dated June 25, 2018, the Permittee requested a revision of the ITP to change the Mitigation Site Construction Elements from the Fagundes Compensatory Mitigation Site to a new location, now recognized as Cottonwood Creek. Because the Permittee would no longer be conducting riparian and wetland restoration at the Fagundes Compensatory Mitigation Site, all references to riparian and wetland restoration at the Fagundes site was removed and replaced with the Cottonwood Creek mitigation site. Due to the varying conditions at the Cottonwood Creek site, some Construction Elements also changed with the changes in mitigation site location. Further, on September 25, 2018, the Permittee requested a 7-day extension provision be added for San Joaquin antelope squirrel relocation. There was no change to the Construction Footprint acreage. On October 2, 2018, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 3** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In an email dated October 4, 2018, the Permittee requested a revision of the ITP to extend the dry season work window beyond October 31<sup>st</sup> for ground-disturbing activities

at the Mitigation Site. There was no change to the Construction Footprint acreage. On November 15, 2018, CDFW reissued **Minor Amendment No. 4** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In an email dated November 27, 2018, the Permittee requested a revision to the ITP to allow for San Joaquin antelope squirrel (SJAS) relocation to occur prior to April 1 and to allow SJAS relocation to occur after November 15 on a case-by-case basis. There was no change to the Construction Footprint acreage. On November 29, 2018, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 5** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated September 10, 2018, the Permittee requested to revise the Project Description to allow for an increase in the Construction Footprint of 6.92 acres for a total of 5,977.50 acres to accommodate new Work Areas for the water pipeline irrigation casing installation and level 3 fiber optic line relocation. Additionally, CDFW initiated amending the Project Description to include installation of water pipeline irrigation casings, dry jack and bore, and horizontal directional drilling as Covered Activities as well as adding Condition of Approval 7.12. On January 17, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 6** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated October 19, 2018, the Permittee requested to revise the Project Description to increase the Construction Footprint by 2.01 acres to a total of 5,979.51 acres for road improvements to Wasco Avenue to function as an access road for agricultural operations north of Kimberlina Road in Kern County. Additionally, the Permittee requested a design change to the HST/Kimberlina Road location that will be contained within the current ITP Construction Footprint at that location. On February 1, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 7** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated August 22, 2018, the Permittee requested to revise the Project Description to accommodate advanced design changes requiring roadway modifications, utility relocations, access road alterations, and canal realignments along and adjacent to the HST alignment at South Avenue; two new locations in Fresno County at Conejo Avenue, and Peach Avenue; as well as changes for existing locations at Flint Avenue and Kent Avenue in Kings County; and Avenue 88 in Tulare County resulting in a net decrease of 1.96 acres changing the Construction Footprint to 5,977.55 acres. In a subsequent email dated January 25, 2019, the Permittee requested to include the use of jack and bore and horizontal directional drilling as Covered Activities throughout the entire Construction Footprint. The Permittee also requested Condition of Approval 7.12, the notification and submission of a Horizontal Directional Drilling and Dry Jack and Bore Level 3 Fiber Optic Line Relocation Plan, be revised to serve as a notification and plan for all horizontal directional drilling and jack and bore

activities occurring within the entire Construction Footprint. On February 13, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 8** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated December 6, 2018, the Permittee requested to revise the Project Description to add construction of an intrusion protection barrier (IPB) within specific limits of the HST alignment to mitigate the risk of potential derailed trains from the adjacent BNSF rail line entering the path of the HST and increase the Construction Footprint by 0.75 acre which brought the total acres to 5,978.30. The IPB construction specific limits occurred in various locations along the California HST route from the vicinity of State Route 43 and Whisler Road to the vicinity of Madera and Poplar Avenues near the City of Shafter in Kern County. IPB construction in this vicinity required re-siting of two wildlife crossing structures. In an email dated January 23, 2019, Permittee further requested modifying the approval process for siting and constructing wildlife crossings. On February 20, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 9** to the ITP incorporating these changes

In a letter dated January 2, 2019, and a subsequent letter dated February 4, 2019, Permittee requested further revision to the ITP, as amended, to cover a 31.79-acre increase to the approved Project Construction Footprint and associated impacts to Covered Species to accommodate the “alternative technical concepts” (ATC) 11 and 13b (design variations). The changes were to employ “reverse stacking” over Garces Highway, Pond Road, and Peterson Road in Kern County; which means to place the railway over the surface roads instead of vice-versa; and a slight alignment revision to avoid a major agricultural water pumping facility known as the Semitropic Pump Station. In a letter dated February 12, 2019, Permittee requested amending the ITP to cover an 86.14-acre increase to the Project Construction Footprint to accommodate design variations including utility relocations, roadway modifications, temporary construction easements, and access roads at 23 locations. Altogether, this brought the Construction Footprint acreage total to 6,096.24. On March 28, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 10** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated March 11, 2019, the Permittee requested a 141.60-acre increase to the approved Project Construction Footprint and associated impacts to Covered Species to accommodate four segments of IPB between State Route 41 and approximately 1000 feet south of East American Avenue in Fresno County, and additional areas for construction access, fence and gate construction, utility relocations, and street and sidewalk modifications. In a letter dated March 12, 2019, the Permittee requested a 105.12-acre increase to the approved Project Construction Footprint and associated impacts to Covered Species to accommodate design variations at 20 locations, in Fresno County. The design variations include utility relocation and protection, roadway modifications, temporary construction easement for staging equipment and materials,



building demolition, additional earthwork, access roads, and/or waterway crossing structures. Altogether, this brought the Construction Footprint acreage total to 6,342.96. On April 25, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 11** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated January 8, 2019, Permittee requested that CDFW further amend the ITP, as amended, to cover increases in the Project Construction Footprint by 98.06 acres, for a total of 6,441.03 acres, to accommodate additional temporary access routes, staging areas, and utility relocation at several locations in Kern County referred to as "Wasco Utilities" and "North-South Utilities." Permittee provided supplemental information related to the requested activities dated January 29 and April 30, 2019. In a letter dated March 6, 2019, Permittee requested that CDFW further amend the ITP, as amended, to remove the required CDFW written approval of pre-construction survey reports. On May 20, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 12** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated April 5, 2019, Permittee requested to increase the Construction Footprint by 19.36 acres to accommodate design changes and refinements in the vicinity of State Route (SR) 46, including utility relocations, removal and construction of a Caltrans retention pond, construction of a retention pond for the Authority, building demolition, and other Covered Activities related to relocation of utilities within Kern County. In a letter dated June 21, 2019, Permittee requested to increase in the Construction Footprint by 150.46 acres to accommodate design variations including utility relocations, roadway modifications, temporary construction easements, access roads, and other Covered Activities at 19 locations within Fresno, Kings and Tulare counties. Together these design variations required an increase in the Construction Footprint of 169.82 acres, for a total of 6,610.85 acres. On August 8, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 13** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated May 3, 2019, Permittee requested a 50.89-acre expansion of the approved ITP Construction Footprint to address 68 utility conflicts involving PG&E overhead powerlines, AT&T telecommunication lines, SoCal Edison optical fiber, Semitropic irrigation lines, and North Kern Water Storage District relocation of Canal 9-22 and Canal P1030. Work to resolve the utility conflicts included bypass, civil work, protect in place, removal, relocation, and other Covered Activities within Kern County. This request also included three roadway modifications in Kern County one of which was a new location which brought the Construction Footprint to 6,661.74 acres. On September 3, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 14** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated May 9, 2019, Permittee requested amending the ITP to increase the Construction Footprint by 146.77 acres to accommodate design variations to the Tule elevated structure as well as utility relocations, roadway modifications, access roads, and other covered activities at 11 locations. The request also proposed eliminating two Temporary Construction Easements (TCEs) and two overcrossings, resulting in a 368.58-acre reduction to the Construction Footprint, for a net decrease of 221.81 acres, which brought the total Construction Footprint to 6,439.93 acres. On September 19, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 15** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated August 27, 2019, Permittee requested increasing the Project Construction Footprint by 7.94 acres at Gromer Avenue in Wasco to cover utility relocation, TCEs, and permanent access road construction. In a letter dated September 5, 2019, Permittee requested increasing the Project Construction Footprint by 15.08 acres to accommodate design variations including utilities and an access road within Semitropic Water Storage District (Semitropic WSD) that would need to be relocated at two locations. In a letter dated September 20, 2019, Permittee requested the correction of Table 1 to include the reduction of 8.93 urban acres already accounted for in Amendment 15 as well as removal of the remaining 12.13 acres of orchard in Table 1 which eliminates both TCE impacts from Amendment 15. Together these brought the new construction footprint to 6,462.95 acres. In an e-mail sent on October 10, 2019, CDFW informed Permittee that there would be two additional changes: 1) Table 9 updated to show the current number of nests taken of the maximum five covered by the ITP and 2) Measures 7.1, 8.16.2 and 8.17.2 were further updated to include Designated Small Mammal Trapper(s), 8.16.2 and 8.17.2 were updated to clarify reporting, and 8.17.2 added conditional concurrence of daily trapping forms for the early resumption and/or extension relocation period for non-business days. On October 11, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 16** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated May 2, 2019, Permittee requested increasing the Project Construction Footprint by 57.32 acres to accommodate a variation in the profile design of the HST alignment construction from elevated viaduct to embankment at the sections of the HST mainline that are outside of streams and other waterways; changes to the bridge structures at Cole Slough, Dutch John Cut, and the Kings River channel; and a change from a bridge to two box culverts at Riverside Ditch. Design changes are also included for utility relocations, roadway modifications, TCEs, staging areas, site preparation, demolition, earthwork, and access roads, and other Covered Activities at seven locations as well as shifting the location of a switching station and addition of 20 new wildlife crossings. The request also proposed the reduction of two TCEs resulting in a 33.87-acre reduction to the Construction Footprint, for a net increase of 23.45 acres,

bringing the new total Construction Footprint to 6,486.40 acres. On October 31, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 17** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated January 8, 2019, and supplemental information dated January 29, 2019, Permittee requested the "ATC 2 Variation" which included a design change in the City of Wasco from viaduct to an at-grade design. Permittee had originally submitted the ATC 2 Variation together with "Wasco Utilities" and "North-South Utilities" (Amendment 12) however, per discussion and request from CDFW, separate amendment requests were submitted. The Permittee provided additional supplemental information dated April 30, 2019, and September 20, 2019, for the ATC 2 Variation (Wasco at-grade). Permittee requested increasing the Project Construction Footprint by 12.58 acres, for a total of 6,498.98 acres to accommodate design change construction of Wasco at-grade and the addition of TCEs needed for access, staging, equipment storage, and other Covered Activities related to road modifications and building demolition. The request also proposed the addition of 13 dedicated wildlife crossings south of Wasco at-grade, San Joaquin kit fox escape refugia, and a minimum of 300 acres of additional habitat conservation lands to mitigate the reduction in wildlife permeability resulting from the Wasco viaduct design change. On November 22, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 18** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated May 14, 2019, Permittee requested design changes and refinements to accommodate several IPBs from just south of East American Ave (approximately 6.40 miles south of the City of Fresno), to just north of Ave 76, (approximately 4.95 miles north of Allensworth). The IPB Variations will not expand the ITP Construction Footprint or alter the general alignment described in the ITP. In a letter dated October 11, 2019, Permittee requested increasing the Project Construction Footprint by 12.15 acres, for a total of 6,511.13 acres, to accommodate design variations including utility relocations, roadway modifications, temporary construction easements, access roads, and other Covered Activities at McCombs Avenue and Merced Avenue. On December 12, 2019, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 19** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter received March 2, 2020, Permittee requested additional clarification regarding both trapping and burrow excavation for Tipton kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys nitratoide*) and San Joaquin antelope squirrel (*Ammospermophilus nelsoni*) when occupied or potentially occupied burrows of either species are present in suitable habitat. There is no change to the Construction Footprint acreage. On March 27, 2020, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 20** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated July 23, 2019, and supplemental information dated July 26, 2019, Permittee requested a net 94.46-acre expansion of the approved ITP Construction

Footprint, for a total of 6,605.59 acres, to accommodate design variations of wildlife crossing structures at Cross Creek and Deer Creek as well as utility relocations, roadway modifications, temporary construction easements, access roads, and other Covered Activities at these two locations. In a letter dated November 8, 2019, Permittee requested to update Table 5 for new dedicated wildlife crossing locations and adjusted locations for existing crossings as well as updating the corresponding Mapbook pages. In a letter dated March 5, 2020, Permittee provided additional culverts for wildlife crossings near Allensworth Ecological Reserve. In a second letter dated March 5, 2020, Permittee provided supplemental information regarding San Joaquin kit fox refugia and this information was updated in a follow-up letter dated March 17, 2020. On May 22, 2020, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 21** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In a letter dated January 6, 2020, Permittee requested a 26.539-acre expansion of the approved ITP Construction Footprint, for a total of 6,632.13 acres, to accommodate design variations including (1) installation of a private access easement in the vicinity of Magnolia Avenue, (2) construction of a new BNSF access road along BNSF right-of-way (ROW) to ensure maintenance and access to BNSF signal equipment and facilities, (3) proposed improvements for Canal 9-22 north of the City of Wasco, (4) installation of drainage ponds and drainage connections within the City of Wasco under the ROW, and (5) installation of a new Pacific Gas and Electric (PG&E) access road to be constructed parallel to the BNSF ROW, and other Covered Activities within and in the vicinity of the City of Wasco. On July 8, 2020, CDFW issued **Major Amendment No. 22** to the ITP incorporating these changes.

In issuing the ITP, Major Amendment No. 1, Major Amendment No. 2, Major Amendment No. 3, Minor Amendment No. 4, Major Amendment No. 5, Major Amendment No. 6, Major Amendment No. 7, Major Amendment No. 8, Major Amendment No. 9, Major Amendment No. 10, Major Amendment No. 11, Major Amendment No. 12, Major Amendment No. 13, Major Amendment No. 14, Major Amendment No. 15, Major Amendment No. 16, Major Amendment No. 17, Major Amendment No. 18, Major Amendment No. 19, Major Amendment No. 20, Major Amendment No. 21, and Major Amendment No. 22 (collectively the ITP, as amended), CDFW found, among other things, that Permittee's compliance with the Conditions of Approval would fully mitigate impacts to the Covered Species and would not jeopardize the continued existence of the Covered Species.

In a letter dated May 4, 2021, and in supplemental information submitted to CDFW on June 4, June 22, July 28, and August 11, 2021, Permittee requested a 26.40-acre expansion of the approved ITP Construction Footprint, for a new total of 6,658.53 acres, to accommodate design variations including: (1) installation of improvements to facilitate

access and egress for construction, operation, and maintenance of the HST; (2) design improvements for McCombs Avenue; (3) anticipated roadway improvements at SR 46 and associated roundabout and related drainage facilities; (4) design improvements for the Merced Overpass; (5) utility relocations, and 6) other Covered Activities within and in the vicinity of the City of Wasco.

This Amendment No. 23 (Amendment), a Major Amendment, makes the following changes to the ITP, as amended:

First, this Amendment increases the size of the Project Construction Footprint by 26.40 acres to a total of 6,658.53 acres of cumulative disturbance to accommodate access and egress, design improvements for McCombs Avenue, SR 46 and the Merced Overpass, utility relocations, and other Covered Activities.

Second, this Amendment updates Table 8 to include work on utilities as well as road modification, adds acreage to 9 locations, adds 3 new locations, and consolidates Project impact language.

Third, this Amendment updates Table 9 and the text regarding increases in the Covered Species habitat impacts for Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and San Joaquin kit fox due to the change to the Project Construction Footprint.

Fourth, this Amendment updates Table 11 and increases the required compensatory HM lands and the Performance Security amount based on the accompanying estimates of management costs required to mitigate for Covered Species impacts.

Fifth, this Amendment modifies Exhibit 6, the "Baseline Map Book," by replacing Map Book Pages 39-41, 43-46, and 48 to reflect the increased Project Construction Footprint.

## AMENDMENT

The ITP, as amended, is further amended as follows (amended language in ***bold italics***; deleted language in ~~strike through~~):

1. The section entitled "Project Description" on page 3 of the ITP, as amended, paragraph one shall be further amended to read as follows:

The Project is approximately 99 miles in length and includes construction and installation of all Project components (Exhibits 1 and 2). Construction and installation of all Project components will disturb up to **6,658.53** ~~6,632.13~~ acres

(hereafter, Construction Footprint). Construction may occur at any point along the Construction Footprint, and construction may occur at multiple locations simultaneously.

2. The section entitled "Impacts of the Taking on Covered Species" on page 69, of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

This ITP covers all Project related activities that cumulatively disturb no more than **6,658.53** ~~6,632.13~~ acres within the Construction Footprint (as depicted in the Baseline Map Book, Exhibit 6, Baseline Maps 1 through 53 and generated from the metadata provided by the Permittee) and no more than 17.32 acres at the Mitigation Site (collectively, the Project Area). Project activities are more fully described in the Project Description of this ITP and include subsurface geotechnical drilling and boring; habitat grubbing, vegetation removal, clearing, demolition, construction of a geotechnical test embankment and associated borrow site excavation and mass grading followed by the mobilization of equipment and materials; earthwork including construction of temporary and permanent excavation support structures; pile driving, excavation of open cut slope and fill, at grade profile excavation and leveling, and retained fill cut, rail bed foundation soil compaction, and elevated profiles and elevated profile structure components including construction and installation of straddle bents, foundations, pile caps, substructures, and superstructures; trench digging and other subsurface utility installation, relocation, and protection; pad preparation and construction of a batch plant, materials storage, fabrication, casting areas, access roads, and staging areas; rotary drilled reinforced concrete cast in place pile and drive pile installation; excavation of drainage swales and fabrication and installation of underground drainage culverts and pipes; **140** ~~131~~ roadway modifications including realignment and resurfacing, construction of new access roads, overcrossing, and undercrossing; construction of waterway crossing structures over the Kings River Complex, Cross Creek, Tule River, Deer Creek, Poso Creek, and other watercourse crossings, partial dewatering and diversion of water; construction and assembly of tie and ballast and slab track railway systems, and shoofly track; erecting mast poles; construction of electrical systems facilities including the OCS, nine TPSS, up to nine switching stations, and up to 27 paralleling stations; construction of signal huts and bungalows including installation of cabling to the field hardware and track stations; traction electrification; excavation and construction of wildlife crossings, construction of the Kings/Tulare Regional Station; construction of a maintenance-of-infrastructure facility; installation of AD and AR fence; construction of temporary job site trailers and field offices including the development of building pads and preparation of parking areas; application of dust suppressants; operation and maintenance activities such as track, power, structure, signaling, train control, communications, intruder, and right-of way

inspection and repair; equipment staging, mowing, inoculum collection, land grading, and excavation of wetlands at the Mitigation Site; and hand tool or auger planting of trees and shrubs, and other activities within the Construction Footprint and Mitigation Site described in the Project Description section of this ITP. All these Project activities are collectively referred to as the Covered Activities.

3. The section entitled "Roadway Modifications" starting on page 42 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

**Roadway *and* Utility Modifications:** Changes to existing roads along or crossing the HST ROW will be needed because the HST requires a fully dedicated grade-separated track alignment for public safety and to achieve the desired speeds. ***In addition to the roadway modifications, many locations also require utility work for installations, relocations and/or additional protection.*** The Project will require ~~140~~ 434 roadway modifications: 45 in Fresno County, 39 in Kings County, 31 in Tulare County, and ~~25~~ 46 in Kern County. Roadway ***and utility*** modifications will ***impact*** ~~occupy~~ **2,135.73** ~~2,117.20~~ total acres of the Construction Footprint (Table 8). At some locations, there will be an option to perform the modification as either an undercrossing or an overcrossing of the HST ROW. In these instances, the more conservative impact in terms of acreage (e.g., higher acreage) has been included and evaluated in this ITP. Handrails, fences, and walkways will be provided for the safety of pedestrians and bicyclists during roadway modification.

4. Table 8 starting on page 43 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended (showing only Kern County where changes occurred) to read as follows:

**Table 8. Location and Size of Project Roadway *and* Utility Modifications**

<b>Location</b> Street Modification	<b>County</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>Scofield Ave</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b><i>Construction activities associated with the access road and utility relocation</i></b>	<b>35.7829044</b>	<b>-119.4010912</b>	<b>0.24</b>
Garces Hwy	Kern	East-west Garces Hwy will cross over the HST along the same alignment as Garces Hwy. A local access road to the east of the HST will be improved for access to parcels. <b><i>Construction activities related to utility installation and crossings.</i></b>	35.7631491, <b>35.7546467</b>	-119.3954439, <b>-119.3901502</b>	<b>36.39</b> <del>35.77</del>

<b>Location Street Modification</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>Woollomes Ave</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Construction activities associated with road construction, structures associated with the waterway crossing, access road, and utility construction, installation, and crossings.</b>	<b>35.7460090, 35.7437776, 35.7322172</b>	<b>-119.3839161, -119.3851441, -119.3718679</b>	<b>1.29</b>
<b>Schuster Rd</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Construction activities associated with the access road and utility relocation</b>	<b>35.732089</b>	<b>119.370911</b>	<b>1.07</b>
Pond Rd	Kern	East-west Pond Rd will cross over HST north of t Pond Rd to reduce the skew of bridge.	35.7182373	-119.360358	47.83
Peterson Rd	Kern	East-west Peterson Rd will cross over HST along the same alignment as Peterson Rd. A local access road to the east of the HST alignment will be added for access to parcels.	35.7031554	-119.3495544	24.25
<b>Sherwood Ave to Blankenship Ave</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Construction activities associated with the access road and utility relocation</b>	<b>35.6704503</b>	<b>-119.3351925</b>	<b>1.36</b>
Blankenship Ave	Kern	Closed road. Added work on a cul-de-sac.	35.6668444	-119.3343725	0.43
Taussig Ave	Kern	Closed road	35.6523207	-119.3319455	0.59
<b>Whisler Rd to Phillips Rd</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Construction activities associated with the waterway crossing structure, access road, and utility construction, installation, and crossings.</b>	<b>35.6376018, 35.6380018</b>	<b>-119.3359953, -119.3311658</b>	<b>0.37</b>
McCombs Ave	Kern	McCombs Ave will shift north and pass over HST, BNSF, and SR 43 and the overcrossing will connect with existing street east of SR 43. The existing intersection between SR 43 and McCombs Ave will be maintained. The BNSF RR crossing will be removed. Addition of a dedicated left turn lane and associated utility relocations, <b>and additional access.</b>	35.6173102	-119.3319996	<b>40.63</b> 40.24

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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED RAIL AUTHORITY  
CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN PROJECT  
Fresno to Bakersfield Section Permitting Phase 1



<b>Location Street Modification</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Acres</b>
<b>State Route 46</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Construction activities associated with road improvements and installation of a roundabout at State Route 43; and utility construction, installation, crossings, and access road.</b>	<b>35.601502, 35.6015409</b>	<b>-119.328118, -119.3256487</b>	<b>5.34</b>
<b>9th St and H St</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Construction activities associated and utility construction, installation, crossings, and access.</b>	<b>35.5918594</b>	<b>-119.3309835</b>	<b>4.55</b>
<b>12th St</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>35.5884982</b>	<b>-119.3332161</b>	<b>0.02</b>
<b>Poso Ave</b>	<b>Kern</b>	<b>Access</b>	<b>35.5873808</b>	<b>-119.3310158</b>	<b>1.27</b>
Wasco Ave	Kern	closed between Jackson Ave and Prospect Ave. Maintained as access road between Prospect Ave and Kimberlina Rd., graveled when complete. <b>Road, sidewalk, and median construction.</b>	35.5634159	-119.3311265	<b>9.01</b> <del>5.94</del>
Kimberlina Rd	Kern	Kimberlina Rd will pass under HST and BNSF RR east of the intersection with SR 43. Existing BNSF RR at-grade crossing will be removed. Vertical profile over Kimberlina Rd increased up to 21 ft, grade separation at Kimberlina Rd and BNSF Railroad modified, and relocation of 15,900 linear ft for BNSF RR between Jackson and Merced Ave eliminated.	35.5581240	-119.3289357	11.89
Merced Ave	Kern	Merced Ave will shift north and pass over HST, BNSF, and SR 43. The overcrossing will connect with existing street east of SR 43. The existing intersection between SR 43 and Merced Ave will be maintained. Additional road modifications. Extension of a dedicated left-turn lane, <b>an acceleration lane, access to the BNSF</b> , and associated utility relocations.	35.5304382	-119.3063389	<b>49.77</b> <del>40.84</del>

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<b>Location Street Modification</b>	<b>County</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Latitude</b>	<b>Longitude</b>	<b>Acres</b>
Madera Ave	Kern	Closed road.	35.5216068	-119.2950167	0.28
Poplar Ave	Kern	Poplar Ave will pass over HST, BNSF, and SR 43. A new connector will connect Poplar Ave and SR 43 west of HST. The existing BNSF RR will be removed.	35.5211784	-119.2956056	24.42
Mettler Ave	Kern	Closed road.	35.5157746	-119.284764	2.29
Fresno Ave	Kern	Fresno Ave will shift south and pass over HST, BNSF, and SR 43 and the overcrossing will connect with existing street east of SR 43. The existing intersection between SR 43 and Fresno Ave will be maintained.	35.5137628	-119.2873627	29.03
Burbank St	Kern	Burbank St will pass over HST on a new alignment.	35.4701140	-119.2347302	26.95
Santa Fe Way	Kern	Santa Fe Way will be realigned west of HST.	35.4694181	-119.2343772	81.47
7th Standard Rd	Kern	7th Standard overcrossing will be raised to provide HST vertical clearance.	35.4412771	-119.2007916	14.71
<b>Total # of Locations 139</b>			<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>2,135.73 2,117.20</b>	

5. Table 9 on page 71 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

**Table 9. Covered Species Habitat Impacts**

<b>Covered Species</b>	<b>Habitat Type</b>	<b>Impact Type</b>	<b>Impact Acres</b>
California tiger salamander	Upland refugia (annual grassland, pasture, barren, fallow field, inactive agriculture, and ruderal)	<b>Direct</b>	35.42
		<b>Permanent</b>	
	Aquatic breeding (vernal pool, open water, seasonal wetland)	<b>Direct</b>	11.14
		<b>Permanent</b>	
		<b>Total</b>	<b>46.56</b>

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Covered Species	Habitat Type	Impact Type	Impact Acres
	Upland refugia (annual grassland at Mitigation Site)	Temporary	16.56
	Aquatic breeding habitat (vernal pools at Mitigation Site)	Temporary	0.76
		<b>Total</b>	<b>17.32</b>
Tipton kangaroo rat	Annual grassland, Alkali desert scrub, barren, pasture, fallow field, inactive agriculture, and ruderal	<b>Direct</b> <del>Permanent</del>	<del>714.58</del> <b>722.66</b>
San Joaquin antelope squirrel	Annual grassland, Alkali desert scrub, barren, pasture, fallow field, inactive agriculture, and ruderal	<b>Direct</b> <del>Permanent</del>	<del>714.58</del> <b>722.66</b>
Swainson's hawk	Foraging (California annual grassland, pasture, barren, fallow field, inactive agriculture, ruderal, field crops, row crops, and irrigated hay crops)	<b>Direct</b> <del>Permanent</del>	2,447.46
	Foraging (annual grassland at Mitigation Site)	Temporary	17.32
	Nesting (riparian and eucalyptus woodland and individual trees)	<b>Direct</b> <del>Permanent</del>	3 of the maximum 5 nest trees
San Joaquin kit fox	Alkali desert scrub, annual grassland, barren, pasture, fallow field, inactive agriculture, ruderal, field crops, row crops, and irrigated hay crops	<b>Direct</b> <del>Permanent</del>	<del>3,908.03</del> <b>3,917.48</b>
	Foraging and denning (annual grassland at Mitigation Site)	Temporary	17.32

6. The first paragraph of the section titled "Tipton Kangaroo Rat," on page 72 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

The extent of the impacts of the taking of Tipton kangaroo rat (TKR) is based on the amount of vegetation cover types that could function as TKR foraging, burrowing, and breeding habitat within the Construction Footprint, the assumption

that all potentially suitable habitat in the Construction Footprint would be permanently destroyed, and an evaluation of Project indirect impacts. The Covered Activities are expected to result in the permanent loss of up to **722.66** ~~744.58~~ acres of potential habitat (Table 9).

7. The first paragraph of the section titled "San Joaquin Antelope Squirrel," on page 73 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

The extent of the impacts of the taking of San Joaquin antelope squirrel (SJAS) is based on the amount of vegetation cover types that could function as SJAS foraging, burrowing, and breeding habitat within the Construction Footprint, the assumption that all potentially suitable habitat in the Construction Footprint would be permanently destroyed, and an evaluation of Project indirect impacts. The Covered Activities are expected to result in the permanent loss of up to **722.66** ~~744.58~~ acres of potential habitat (Table 9).

8. The first paragraph of the section titled "San Joaquin Kit Fox," on page 75 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

The extent of the impacts of the taking of San Joaquin kit fox (SJKF) is based on the amount of vegetation cover types that could function as SJKF foraging, denning, and breeding habitat within the Construction Footprint, the assumption that all potentially suitable habitat in the Construction Footprint would be permanently destroyed, and an evaluation of Project indirect impacts. The Covered Activities are expected to result in the permanent loss of up to **3,917.48** ~~3,908.03~~ acres of potential habitat (Table 9). Grading and excavation at the Mitigation Site would also result in up to 17.32 acres of temporary impacts to SJKF habitat.

9. Table 11 on page 130 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

**Table 11. Required Mitigation for Project-Related Impacts to Covered Species**

<b>Covered Species Name Common Name (Scientific Name)</b>	<b>Habitat Type</b>	<b>Project Impacts</b>	<b>Required Mitigation Acreage</b>
California tiger salamander ( <i>Ambystoma californiense</i> )	Upland	35.42	106.26
	Aquatic	11.14	1.11
Tipton kangaroo rat ( <i>Dipodomys nitratoide nitratoide</i> )	Natural	<b>722.66</b> <del>714.58</del>	<b>2,167.98</b> <del>2,143.74</del>
San Joaquin antelope squirrel ( <i>Ammospermophilus nelsoni</i> )	Natural	<b>722.66</b> <del>714.58</del>	<b>2,167.98</b> <del>2,143.74</del>
Swainson's hawk ( <i>Buteo swainsoni</i> ) (active trees within 0.5 mile of the project footprint)	Foraging habitat 0-1 miles	562.68	562.68
	Foraging habitat 1-5 miles	1,227.29	920.47
	Foraging habitat 5-10 miles	657.48	328.74
San Joaquin kit fox ( <i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> )	Natural and agriculture	<b>3,917.48</b> <del>3,908.03</del>	<b>2,518.80</b> <del>2,499.93</del>
<b>Total Compensatory Mitigation</b>			<b>8,774.03</b> <del>8,706.67</del>

10. Condition of Approval 9.1 (Cost Estimates) on pages 131 and 132 of the ITP, as amended, shall be further amended to read as follows:

9.1. Cost Estimates. CDFW has estimated the cost of acquisition, protection, and perpetual management of the HM lands as follows:

9.1.1. Land acquisition costs for HM lands identified in Condition of Approval 9.2 below, estimated at an average of \$11,413.90/acre for up to **8,774.03** ~~8,706.67~~ acres: **\$100,145,901.02** ~~\$99,377,060.71~~. Land acquisition costs are estimated using local fair market current value for lands with habitat values meeting mitigation requirements.

9.1.2. Start-up costs for HM lands, including initial site protection and enhancement costs as described in Condition of Approval 9.2.5 below, estimated at **\$4,664,637.89** ~~\$4,628,826.53~~.

- 9.1.3. Interim management period funding as described in Condition of Approval 9.2.6 below, estimated at ~~\$2,061,181.88~~ **\$2,045,357.77**.
- 9.1.4. Long-term management funding as described in Condition of Approval 9.3 below, estimated at \$3,570.26/acre for up to ~~8,774.03~~ **8,706.67** acres: ~~\$31,325,568.35~~ **\$31,085,075.63**. Long-term management funding is estimated initially for the purpose of providing Security to ensure implementation of HM lands management.
- 9.1.5. Related transaction fees including but not limited to account set-up fees, administrative fees, title and documentation review and related title transactions, expenses incurred from other state agency reviews, and overhead related to transfer of HM lands to CDFW as described in Condition of Approval 9.4, estimated at \$12,000.

11. Condition of Approval 10.1 (Performance Security) on page 136 of the ITP, is amended to read as follows:

10.1. Security Amount. The Security shall be in the amount of ~~\$137,148,320.64~~ **\$138,209,289.14**. This amount is based on the cost estimates identified in Condition of Approval 9.1 above.

12. Exhibit 6 ("Baseline Map Book") in the list of attachments on page 115 of the ITP, as amended, is amended to include the replacement of Map Book Pages 39-41 43-46, and 48 with the corresponding page included in Attachment A23-1 of this Amendment, to reflect the increased Project Footprint.

The corresponding measures in the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) (Attachment 1 of the ITP, as amended) shall be further amended to read the same as above. All terms and conditions of the ITP, as amended, and the MMRP that are not expressly amended herein remain in effect and must be implemented and adhered to by the Permittee.

## FINDINGS

*Issuance of this Amendment will increase the amount of take for some of the Covered Species compared to the Project as originally approved; however, because the HM lands protection and management funding requirements will be commensurately increased, it is not expected that this Amendment will increase Project impacts on these*

*species (i.e., “impacts of taking” as used in Fish and Game Code Section 2081, subd. (b)(2)).*

Discussion: This Amendment makes five specific changes to the ITP, as amended. First, this Amendment increases the size of the Project Construction Footprint by 26.40 acres to a total of 6,658.53 acres of cumulative disturbance to accommodate access and egress, design improvements for McCombs Avenue, SR 46 and the Merced Overpass, utility relocations, and other Covered Activities.

Second, this Amendment updates Table 8 to include work on utilities as well as road modification, adds acreage to 9 locations, adds 3 new locations, and consolidates Project impact language.

Third, this Amendment updates Table 9 and the text regarding increases in the Covered Species habitat impacts for Tipton kangaroo rat, San Joaquin antelope squirrel, and San Joaquin kit fox because of the change to the Project Construction Footprint.

Fourth, this Amendment updates Table 11 and increases the required compensatory HM lands and the Performance Security amount based on the accompanying estimates of management costs required to mitigate for Covered Species impacts.

Fifth, this Amendment modifies Exhibit 6, the “Baseline Map Book,” by replacing Map Book Pages 39-41, 43-46, and 48 to reflect the increased Project Construction Footprint.

CDFW has determined that although this Amendment may result in an increase in take of the Covered Species, and increased Covered Species Habitat impacts, the additional impacts of the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated through implementation of the Conditions of Approval. Because the impacts will be minimized and fully mitigated, there will be no increase in Project impacts to the Covered Species with this Amendment.

*Issuance of this Amendment does not affect CDFW’s previous determination that issuance of the ITP, as amended meets and is otherwise consistent with the permitting criteria set forth in Fish and Game Code section 2081, subdivisions (b) and (c).*

Discussion: CDFW determined in June 2015 that the Project as approved, met the standards for issuance of an ITP under CESA. CDFW determined in March 2017, in September 2018, in October 2018, twice in November 2018, in January 2019, three times in February 2019, in March 2019, in April 2019, in May 2019, in August 2019, twice in September 2019, twice in October 2019, in November 2019, and in December 2019 that Amendments No. 1, No. 2, No. 3, No. 4, No. 5, No. 6, No. 7, No. 8, No. 9, No. 10,

No. 11, No. 12, No. 13, No. 14, No. 15, No. 16, No. 17, No. 18, No. 19, No. 20, No. 21, and No. 22 respectively, to the ITP met the standards for issuance of an ITP under CESA. This determination included findings that, among other things, the impacts of the taking would be minimized and fully mitigated and that the Project would not jeopardize the continued existence of the Covered Species. Those findings are unchanged with respect to this Amendment because the Project and ITP, as amended: (1) will increase the habitat compensation in proportion to the increase in impacts so that the fully mitigate standard is still met; (2) does not alter the Permittee's continued adherence to and implementation of the avoidance and minimization measures set forth in the Conditions of Approval in the ITP, as amended, and MMRP which will minimize and fully mitigate impacts of the taking on the Covered Species.

*None of the factors that would trigger the need for subsequent or supplemental environmental analysis of the Project under Public Resources Code section 21166 or California Code of Regulations, title 14, sections 15162 and 15163, exist as a result of this Amendment.*

Discussion: CDFW issued the original ITP in June 2015, Major Amendment No. 1 to the ITP in March 2017, Major Amendment No. 2 in September 2018, Major Amendment No. 3 in October 2018, Minor Amendment No. 4 and Major Amendment No. 5 in November 2018, Major Amendment No. 6 in January 2019, Major Amendments 7, 8, and 9 in February 2019, Major Amendment No. 10 in March 2019, Major Amendment No. 11 in April 2019, Major Amendment No. 12 in May 2019, Major Amendment No. 13 in August 2019, Major Amendments No. 14 and 15 in September 2019, Major Amendment No. 16 and 17 in October 2019, Major Amendment No. 18 in November 2019, Major Amendment No. 19 in December 2019, Major Amendment No. 20 in March 2020, Major Amendment No. 21 in May 2020, and Major Amendment No. 22 in July 2020 as a responsible agency under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq.) after, among other things, considering the California High-Speed Train: Fresno to Bakersfield Section Final Project Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) (SCH No. 2009091126) certified by the lead agency, California High-Speed Rail Authority, on May 7, 2014. As explained in the findings below, CDFW finds for purposes of CESA that this Amendment represents a major change to the ITP, as amended. However, for the reasons explained above, CDFW concludes that approval of this Amendment will not result in and does not have the potential to create any new significant or substantially more severe environmental effects than previously analyzed and disclosed by California High Speed Rail Authority during its lead agency review of the Project, particularly with respect to the impacts authorized by CDFW pursuant to the ITP, as amended. As a result, CDFW finds that no subsequent or supplemental



environmental review is required by CEQA as part of CDFW's approval of this Amendment.

*CDFW finds that this Amendment is a Major Amendment, as defined in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 783.6, subdivision (c)(5).*

Discussion: This Amendment increases the size of the Project Construction Footprint by 26.40 acres to a total of 6,658.53 acres of cumulative disturbance to accommodate access and egress, design improvements for McCombs Avenue, SR 46 and the Merced Overpass, utility relocations, and other Covered Activities; updates Table 8 to include work on utilities as well as road modification and adds 3 new locations; updates Table 9 and the text regarding increases in the Covered Species habitat impacts; updates Table 11 and increases the required compensatory HM lands and the Performance Security amount required to mitigate for Covered Species impacts resulting from the increased Project Construction Footprint in Covered Species habitat; modifies Exhibit 6, the Baseline Map Book.

As described above, these changes to the ITP, as amended, will increase the Project Construction Footprint, add locations of Covered Activities, and modify the Permittee's mitigation obligations. Therefore, this Amendment will substantially increase the scope or nature of the permitted Project or activity, or significantly modify the minimization, mitigation, or monitoring measures in the ITP, as amended. CDFW has determined that the changes to the ITP, as amended, constitutes a Major Amendment as defined in California Code of Regulations, title 14, section 783.6, subdivision (c)(5).

The authorization provided by this Amendment is not valid until Permittee signs and dates the acknowledgement below, and returns one of the duplicate originals of this Amendment by registered first class mail to CDFW at:

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
Habitat Conservation Planning Branch  
Attention: CESA Permitting Program  
Post Office Box 944209  
Sacramento, California 94244-2090

Alternatively, the Permittee shall email the digitally signed amendment to CESA@wildlife.ca.gov. Digital signatures shall comply with Government Code section 16.5.

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**Attachment:**

ATTACHMENT A23-1      EXHIBIT 6 Baseline Map Book Pages 39-41, 43-46,  
and 48

**APPROVED BY THE CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE**

on 10/12/2021

DocuSigned by:  
  
FA83F09FE08945A...

Julie A. Vance, Regional Manager  
Central Region

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT**

The undersigned: (1) warrants that he or she is acting as a duly authorized representative of the Permittee, (2) acknowledges receipt of the original ITP and this Amendment, and (3) agrees on behalf of the Permittee to comply with all terms and conditions of the ITP, as amended.

By:  2BE732B704AF4C9...      Date: 10/19/2021

Printed Name: Serge Stanich      Title: Director of Environmental Services

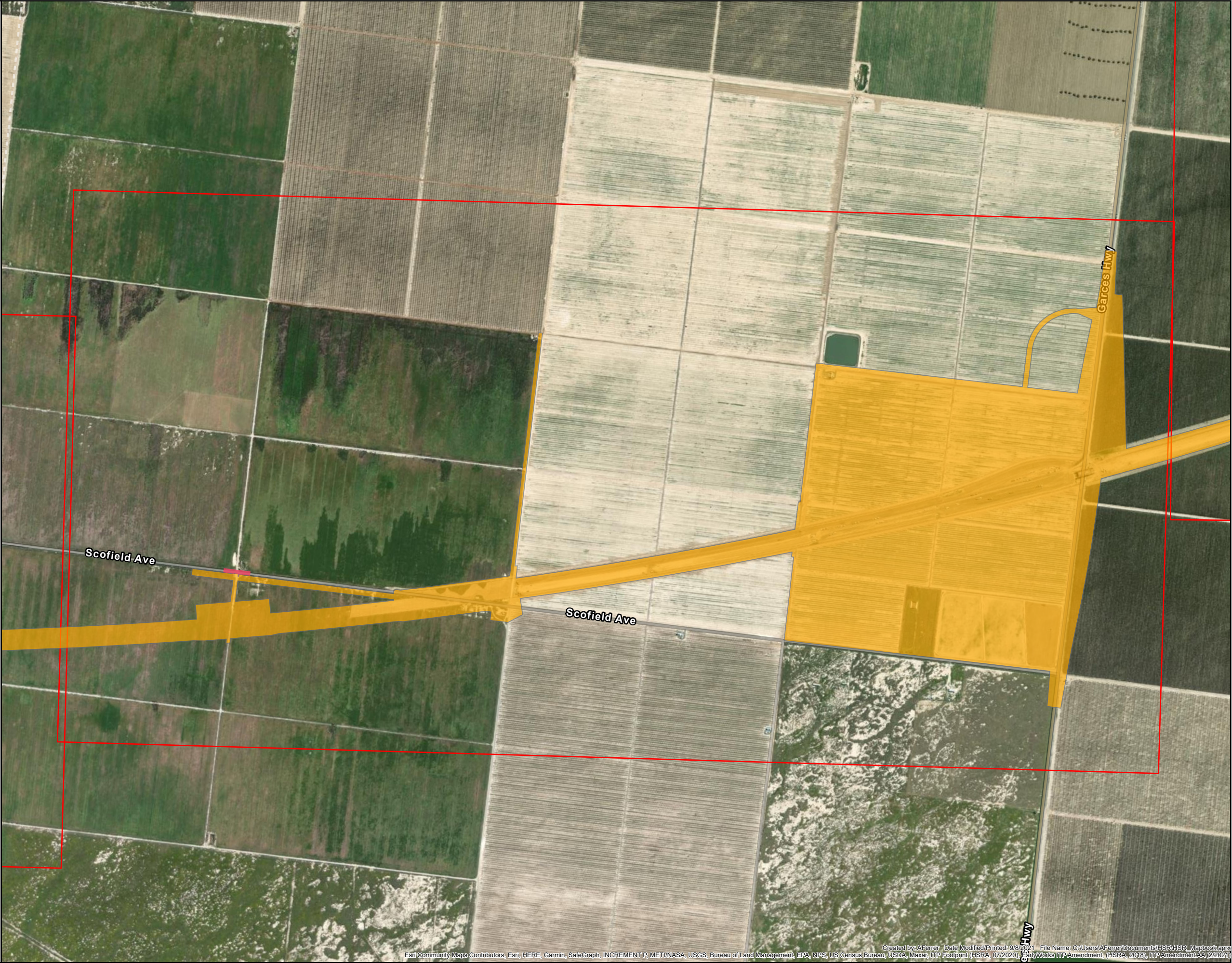
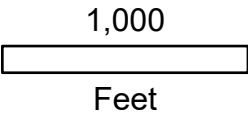
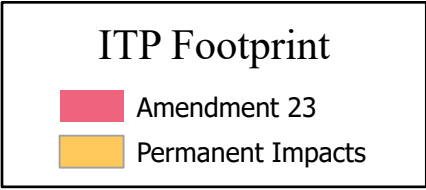
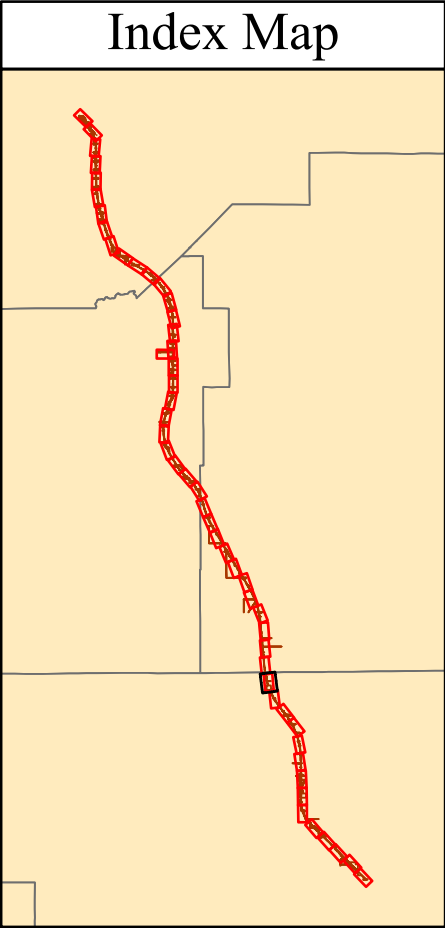
Major Amendment No. 23  
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CALIFORNIA HIGH-SPEED TRAIN PROJECT  
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ATTACHMENT A23-1

Exhibit 6. Baseline Map Book pages 39-41, 43-46, and 48

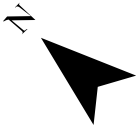
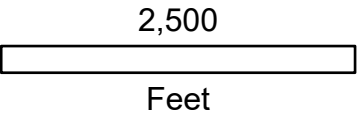
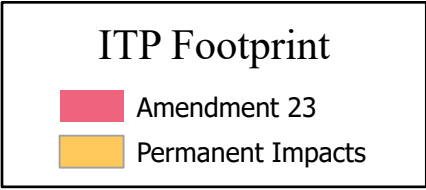
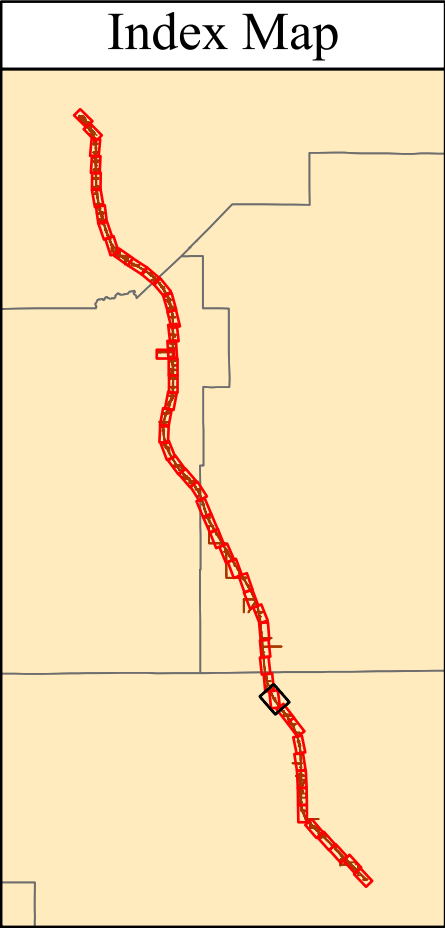


High-Speed Train  
Fresno to Bakersfield  
Construction Footprint  
CP 4



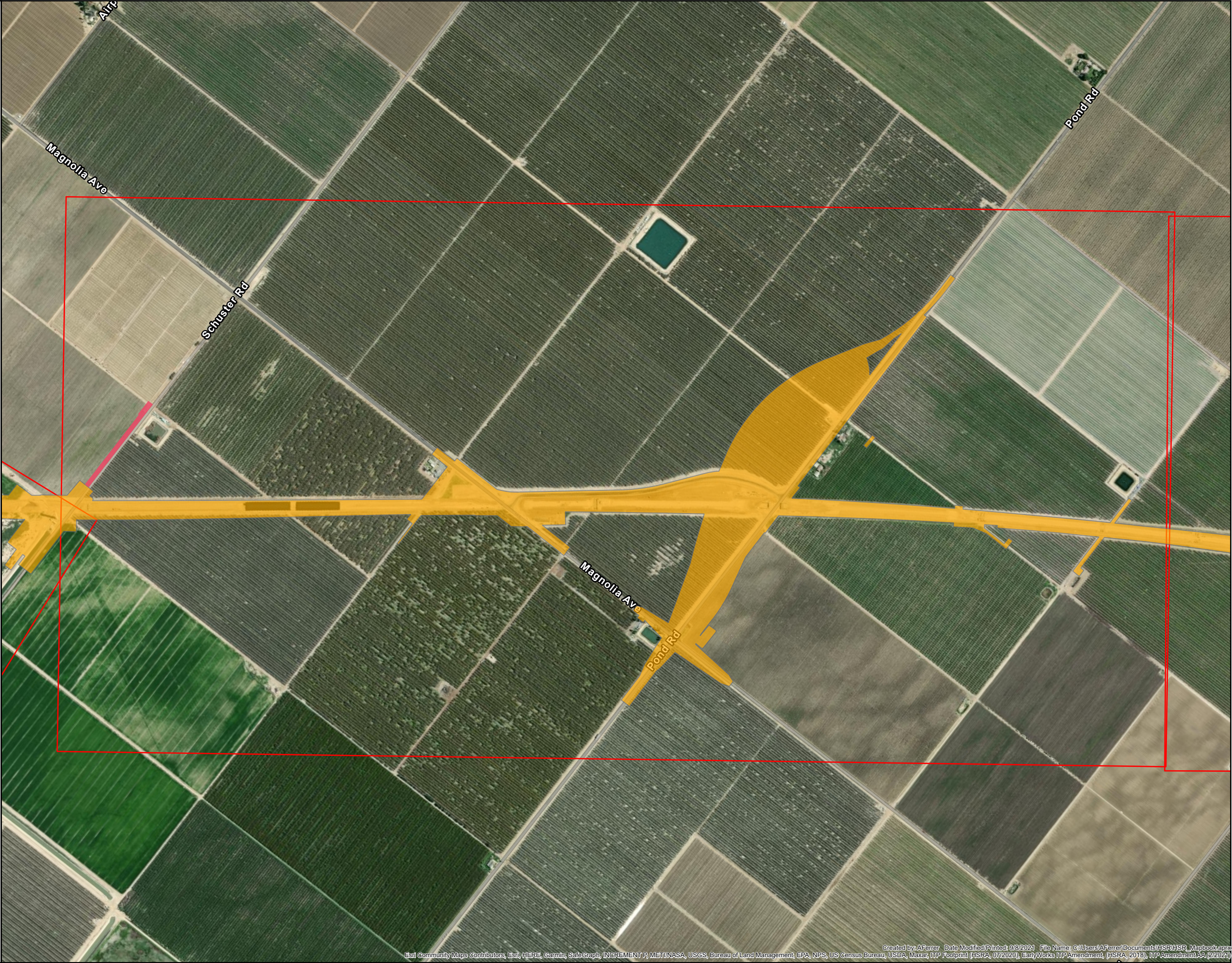
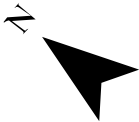
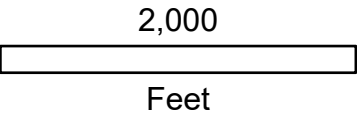
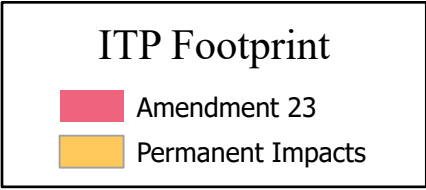
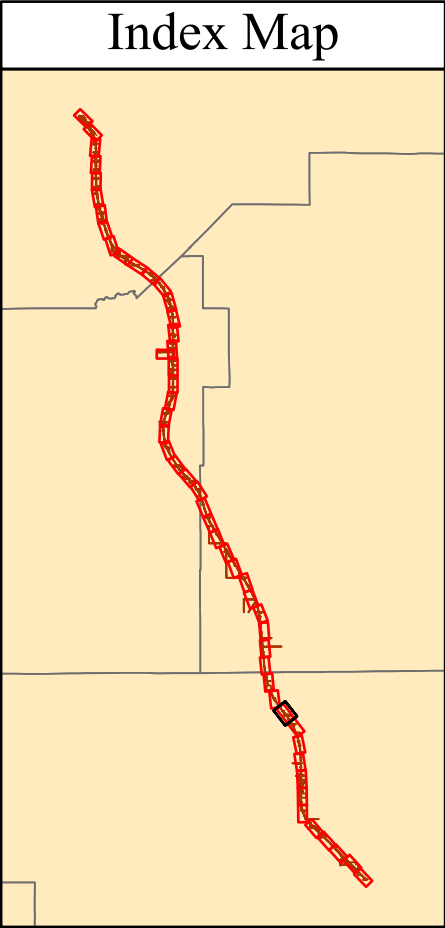


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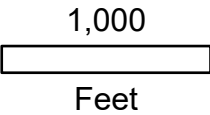
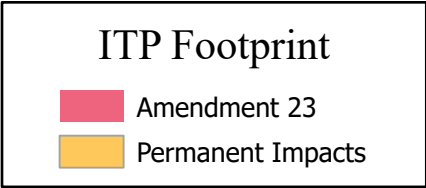
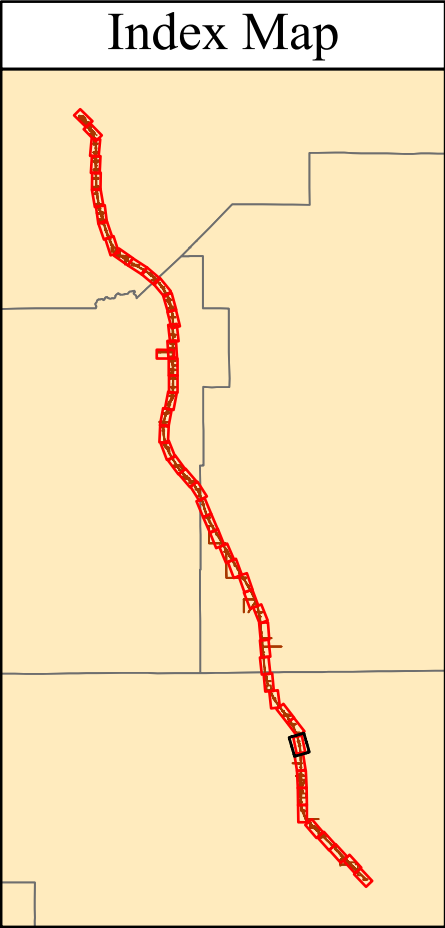


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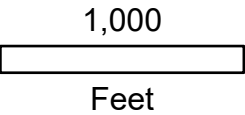
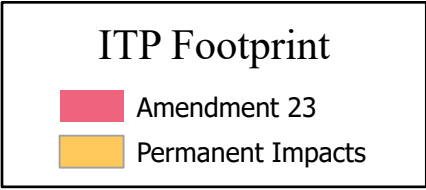
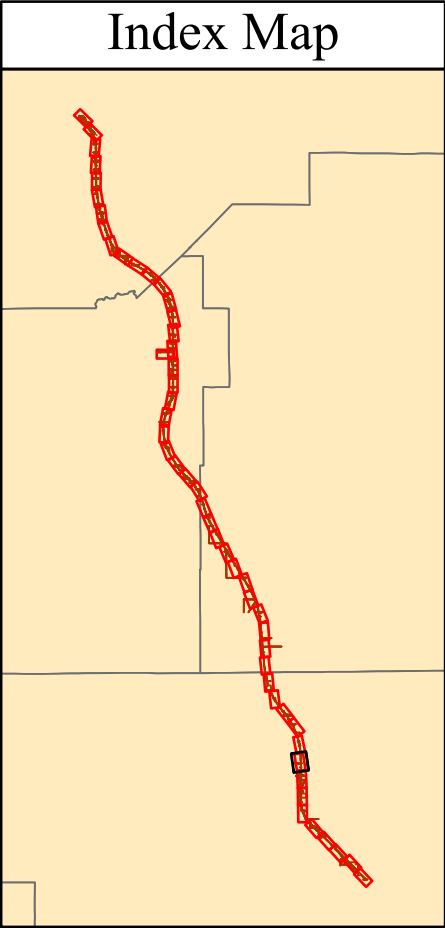


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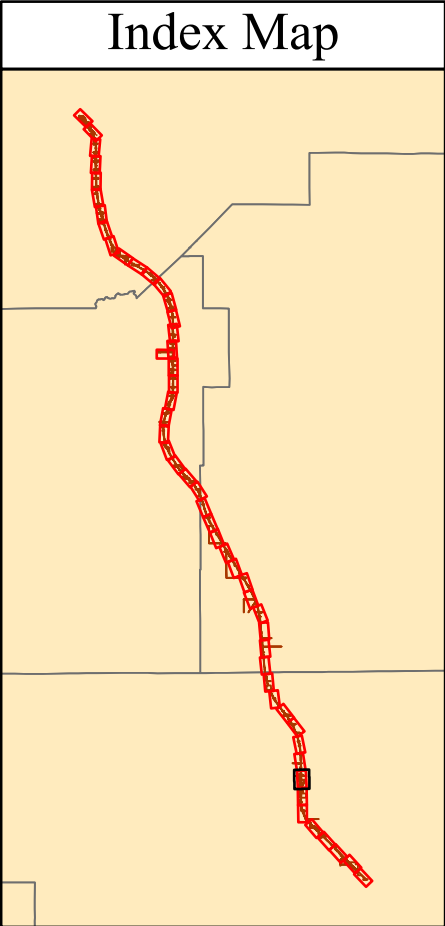


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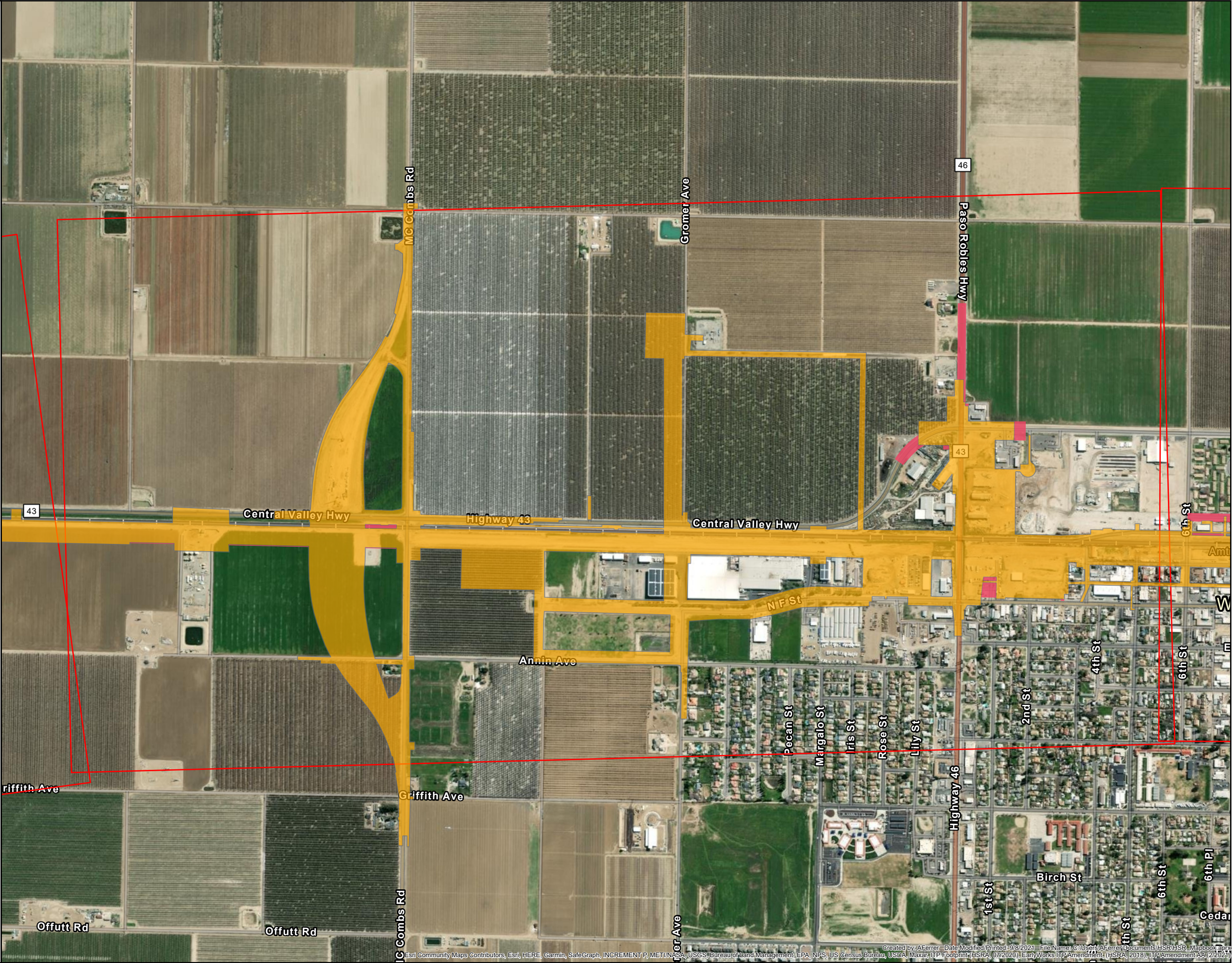
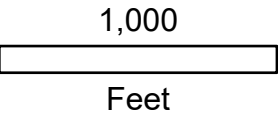
High-Speed Train  
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ITP Footprint

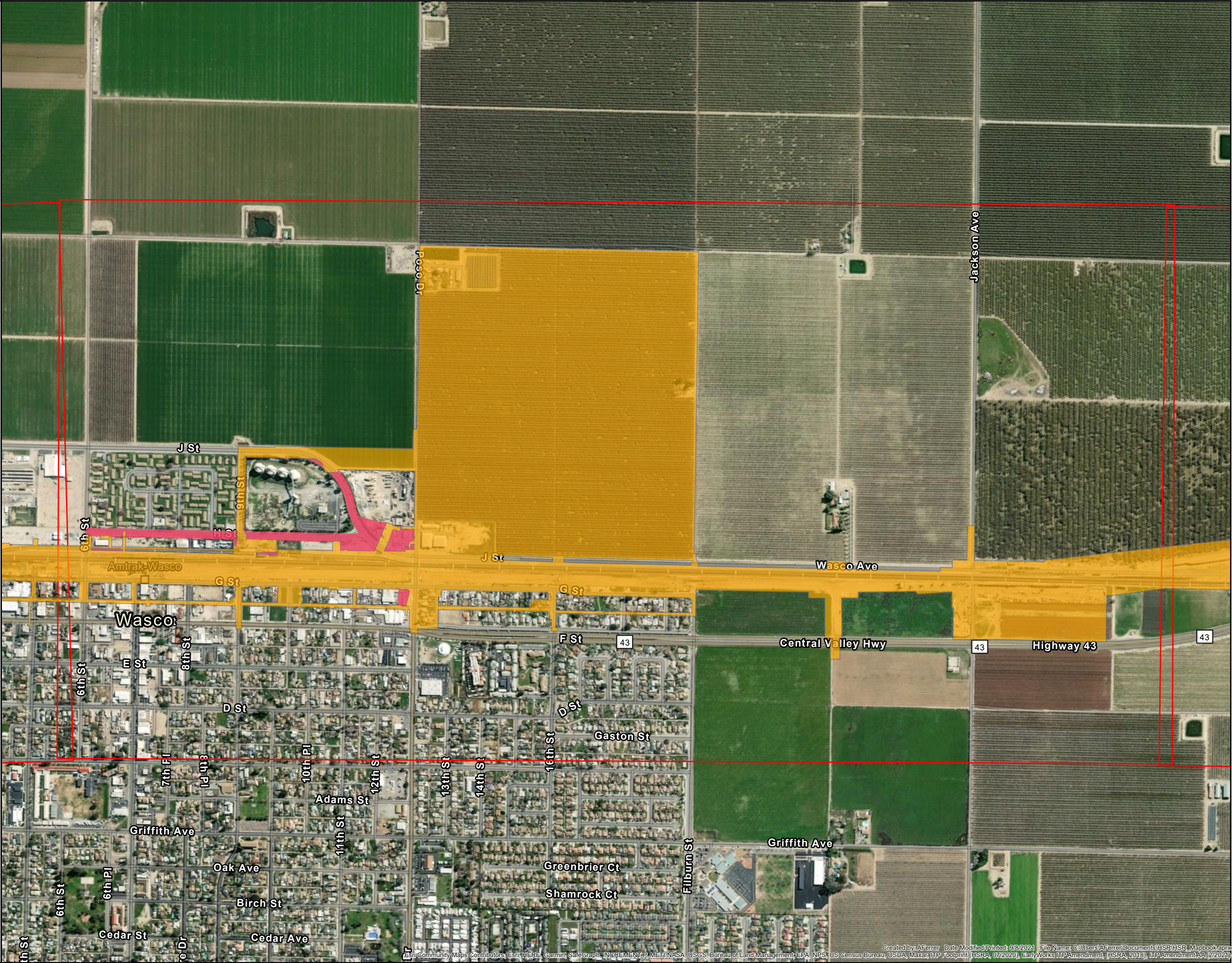
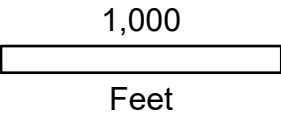
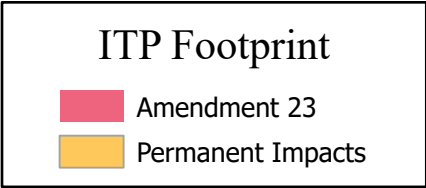
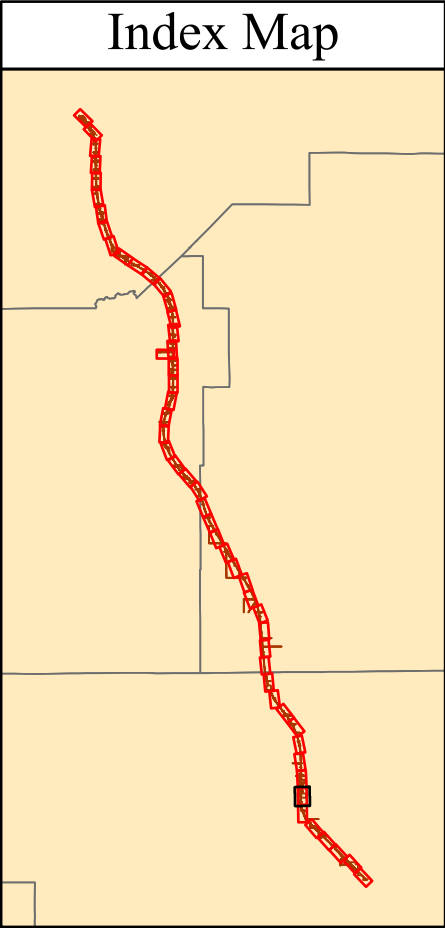
Amendment 23

Permanent Impacts





High-Speed Train  
Fresno to Bakersfield  
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High-Speed Train  
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