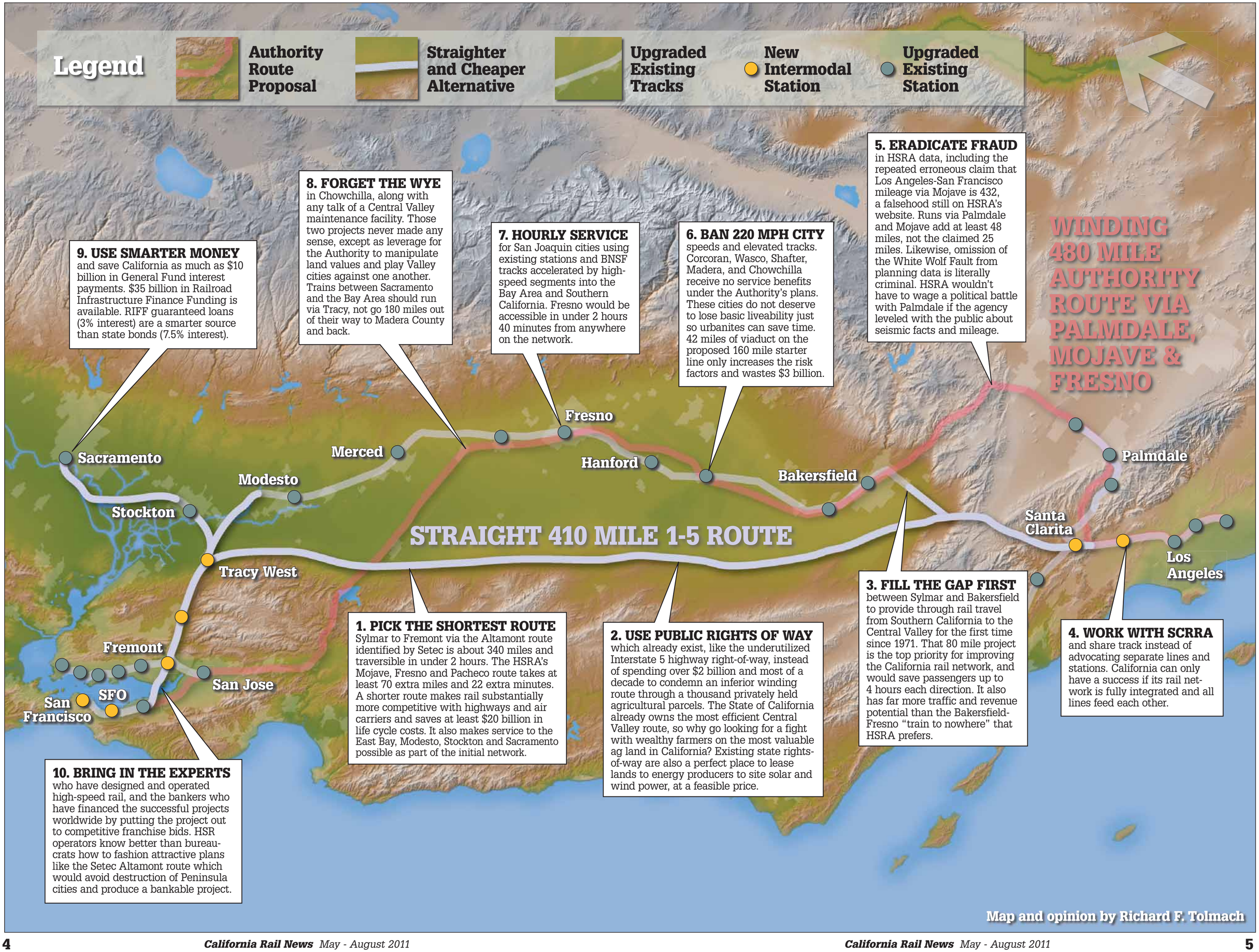
10 WAYS TO STRAIGHTEN OUT THE CROOKED HSR PROPOSAL



9. USE SMARTER MONEY and save California as much as $10 billion in General Fund interest payments. $35 billion in Railroad Infrastructure Finance Funding is available. RIFF guaranteed loans (3% interest) are a smarter source than state bonds (7.5% interest).

8. FORGET THE WYE in Chowchilla, along with any talk of a Central Valley maintenance facility. Those two projects never made any sense, except as leverage for the Authority to manipulate land values and play Valley cities against one another. Trains between Sacramento and the Bay Area should run via Tracy, not go 180 miles out of their way to Madera County and back.

7. HOURLY SERVICE for San Joaquin cities using existing stations and BNSF tracks accelerated by high-speed segments into the Bay Area and Southern California. Fresno would be accessible in under 2 hours 40 minutes from anywhere on the network.

6. BAN 220 MPH CITY speeds and elevated tracks. Corcoran, Wasco, Shafter, Madera, and Chowchilla receive no service benefits under the Authority's plans. These cities do not deserve to lose basic liveability just so urbanites can save time. 42 miles of viaduct on the proposed 160 mile starter line only increases the risk factors and wastes $3 billion.

5. ERADICATE FRAUD in HSRA data, including the repeated erroneous claim that Los Angeles-San Francisco mileage via Mojave is 432, a falsehood still on HSRA's website. Runs via Palmdale and Mojave add at least 48 miles, not the claimed 25 miles. Likewise, omission of the White Wolf Fault from planning data is literally criminal. HSRA wouldn't have to wage a political battle with Palmdale if the agency leveled with the public about seismic facts and mileage.

1. PICK THE SHORTEST ROUTE Sylmar to Fremont via the Altamont route identified by Setec is about 340 miles and traversible in under 2 hours. The HSRA's Mojave, Fresno and Pacheco route takes at least 70 extra miles and 22 extra minutes. A shorter route makes rail substantially more competitive with highways and air carriers and saves at least $20 billion in life cycle costs. It also makes service to the East Bay, Modesto, Stockton and Sacramento possible as part of the initial network.

2. USE PUBLIC RIGHTS OF WAY which already exist, like the underutilized Interstate 5 highway right-of-way, instead of spending over $2 billion and most of a decade to condemn an inferior winding route through a thousand privately held agricultural parcels. The State of California already owns the most efficient Central Valley route, so why go looking for a fight with wealthy farmers on the most valuable ag land in California? Existing state rights-of-way are also a perfect place to lease lands to energy producers to site solar and wind power, at a feasible price.

3. FILL THE GAP FIRST between Sylmar and Bakersfield to provide through rail travel from Southern California to the Central Valley for the first time since 1971. That 80 mile project is the top priority for improving the California rail network, and would save passengers up to 4 hours each direction. It also has far more traffic and revenue potential than the Bakersfield-Fresno "train to nowhere" that HSRA prefers.

4. WORK WITH SCRRA and share track instead of advocating separate lines and stations. California can only have a success if its rail network is fully integrated and all lines feed each other.

10. BRING IN THE EXPERTS who have designed and operated high-speed rail, and the bankers who have financed the successful projects worldwide by putting the project out to competitive franchise bids. HSR operators know better than bureaucrats how to fashion attractive plans like the Setec Altamont route which would avoid destruction of Peninsula cities and produce a bankable project.