

SENATE THIRD READING

SB 1375 (Cortese)

As Amended July 2, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Exempts from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) a public urban, intermodal rail station project within a long-urbanized area within the statewide passenger rail network, at which high-capacity light, commuter, and intercity rail services converge that meets specified conditions.

Major Provisions

Exempts from CEQA a public urban, intermodal rail station project within a long-urbanized area within the statewide passenger rail network, at which high-capacity light, commuter, and intercity rail services converge that meets the following conditions:

- 1) The project primarily modernizes and expands existing station facilities and rail infrastructure to improve operational efficiency, passenger capacity, and intermodal connectivity, including changes to tracks, platforms, station facilities, public plazas or realms, safety barriers, noise barriers, sound barriers, roadway crossing and access improvements, intermodal connections and facilities, transit-oriented development, and the interface with adjacent development.
- 2) The station passenger rail service will exclusively use Tier 4 or cleaner rolling stock or locomotive engines.
- 3) The station is in an urbanized area and is not located in an air basin designated as a serious, severe, or extreme nonattainment area for particulate matter or ozone.
- 4) The majority of the station project's footprint is in an existing publicly owned right-of-way or on public property.
- 5) The project complies with all applicable historic preservation measures, including Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
- 6) The project adopts a natural resource management plan or equivalent document that identifies what natural resources are present on the site and how environmental impacts affecting those natural resources will be avoided, reduced, and compensated for.
- 7) The project complies with the California Endangered Species Act, Chapter 6 of Division 2 of the Fish and Game Code, the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and all applicable natural resource protection laws.
- 8) The lead agency provides notice to and consults with California Native American tribes that are traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area, as specified. *Specifies that this tribal consultation does not need to include a consultation relating to the type of environmental review required.*

- 9) The project adopts and implements a construction impact and mitigation plan, specifying mechanisms to reduce construction-related impacts to below state and local requirements for and communicate proactively and responsively with the community.
- 10) The project adopts a plan to fully address any displacement from the project consistent with federal and state relocation laws, including a plan to replace any lost housing units through new market-rate and affordable housing.
- 11) The plan includes specific commitments to expanding tenant education resources and offering tenants subject to relocation by the project access to legal counsel.
- 12) The local land use authority adopts an affordable housing implementation plan that prioritizes the production of new affordable housing units, preservation of affordable homes, and protection of vulnerable residents from displacement to further plan for and address displacement. The plan may be citywide or for a specific area covering the project.
- 13) The notice of exemption is filed, as specified, before January 1, 2032.

COMMENTS

This bill is intended to exempt the project to modernize and expand Diridon Station in San Jose from CEQA. The lead agency for the project, Caltrain, has hired a consultant to begin required environmental review, including CEQA and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), with an estimated completion in 2029. The preferred project alternative is estimated to cost \$3-6 billion and is likely to take many years to fully fund and construct, following completion of environmental review and approval by the relevant agencies.

Aspects of the station project and area have been reviewed under CEQA at the planning and project level in recent years. Specifically, the station was included in the Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) to Silicon Valley Phase 2 environmental impact report (EIR) certified in 2018, the Diridon Station Area Plan programmatic EIR certified in 2021, the Downtown West Project EIR certified in 2021, and the high-speed rail project EIR certified in 2022. Regardless of the application of CEQA, the project will require a NEPA review because of the use of federal funds. It is estimated that the CEQA exemption would reduce the project review time by one year.

According to the Author

SB 1375 establishes a targeted, criteria-based CEQA exemption tailored to the distinct realities of complex, multi-modal urban transit hubs. By recognizing the extensive environmental review, robust land-use planning, and years of deep, iterative community engagement already completed for these hubs, the bill responsibly saves time and public funds by eliminating redundant administrative delays for projects already thoroughly shaped by the public. Importantly, this measure maintains strict, legally binding compliance with all other state and federal environmental laws and regional permitting structures. Enabling the timely delivery of these critical transit centers will unlock profound regional and statewide benefits—accelerating a mode shift from automobiles, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, spurring transit-oriented housing, and creating thousands of high-quality jobs—without compromising essential statutory safeguards.

Arguments in Support

According to bill sponsor City of San Jose, the exemptions provided in SB 1375 appropriately recognize the prior environmental reviews conducted for key project components while maintaining compliance with all other applicable environmental laws and permitting requirements. This approach avoids duplicative review, reduces project delivery risk, and ensures that this critical infrastructure investment can move forward in a timely and cost-effective manner.

Arguments in Opposition

None received.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, negligible state costs.

VOTES**SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1**

YES: Allen, Alvarado-Gil, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNeerney, Menjivar, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Niello

ASM NATURAL RESOURCES: 13-0-1

YES: Bryan, Ellis, Alanis, Connolly, Garcia, Haney, Hoover, Kalra, Macedo, Pellerin, Schultz, Wicks, Zbur

ABS, ABST OR NV: Muratsuchi

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 15-0-0

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Arambula, Calderon, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

UPDATED

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