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## 8. Create a committee of stakeholders to explore potential improvements to the North Coast Railroad Authority.

The Commission recommends that the Legislature create a committee of stakeholders involved in the development and operation of the North Coast Railroad Authority (NCRA) to explore various scenarios for the Authority's future.

NCRA was created by State law in 1989 to maintain and expand rail service to the North Coast area of the State. There have been a series of loans and grants of federal and State funds provided to NCRA to purchase right of way, rolling stock and other equipment, and make improvements and repairs to related facilities.

Between 1991 and 2008, the Commission allocated Proposition 116, Transportation Planning & Development (Transit Capital Improvement Program), and Traffic Congestion Relief Program (TCRP) funding. The last reimbursement request by and authorized payment to NCRA by the Department was processed in January 2012.

In a recent presentation to the Commission, NCRA leadership shared that the enterprise is having difficulty maintaining and expanding rail service, has never been self-sufficient, and is routinely unable to pay its obligations. The Commission asked the NCRA representatives to provide a business plan identifying potential responsible directions the Authority can implement moving forward. To date, the NCRA has been unable to produce a plan that makes the business case for its existence.

Given the uncertain future direction expressed by the Authority's management, the Commission believes that it is in the best interest of the state that a committee of stakeholders be formed to oversee the development of a plan for the future of this statutorily-created enterprise.

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## 9. Require Caltrans to develop a streamlined process for approval of project initiation documents.

The Commission recommends that the Legislature require Caltrans to approve project initiation documents (PIDs) in a streamlined manner, and create a system by which regions or their consultants can effectively and efficiently provide to Caltrans the proper studies necessary to initiate projects on the state system.

Before potential projects can be developed and constructed, detailed project planning work must first be completed. Initial project plans, called PIDs, contain specific information, including the identification of the transportation problem that is to be addressed, an evaluation of potential alternatives to address the problem, and the justification and description of the preferred solution. Each PID also includes the estimated cost, scope, and schedule of the project—information needed to decide if, how, and when to fund the project.