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There's no reason we can't build it here

In Japan, the first bullet trains began service in 1964.

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A half century later, California is still struggling with enormous problems in developing high-speed rail service linking Los Angeles, San Francisco and other cities.

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Controversies over the cost, the route, the practicality and the usefulness have persisted for years. Now, to add more injury to California taxpayers' wallets, Gov. Jerry Brown's High-Speed Rail Authority is seeking exemption from "Buy American" provisions of the federal aid for more than a dozen train components.

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Included on the list of components that the authority wants to purchase overseas are motors, gearboxes, axles, wheels, brakes, derailment mitigation devices and undercarriages.

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It's particularly puzzling that even the entire aluminum car body shells are expected to be made overseas because Japanese-based Kinkisharyo is building rail cars for Los Angeles County transit rail lines right here in Palmdale.

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The "Buy American" requirements are part of the economic stimulus spending package that President Barack Obama signed in 2009 in an effort to revive the recession-slowed economy. Congress eagerly appropriated \$10 billion to build new bullet train corridors and to upgrade existing rail lines to accommodate faster trains.

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Because job creation was so important in the program, the U.S. legislators not only included existing Buy American Act mandates in the law, they also boosted them, requiring that 100% of the components of the train systems be built in America to accelerate the creation of a domestic manufacturing industry.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority received the single largest grant from the high-speed rail funding program. Now it's asking the Federal Railroad Administration to exempt its bullet train from the Buy America Act.

President-elect Donald J. Trump in his campaign promised to develop millions of new jobs in the United States. He insisted that he would have firms that have moved overseas return to the U.S. He also praised China's high-speed rail systems.

Although the Antelope Valley Press has consistently opposed the California bullet train project as more expensive, more disruptive and less useful than its supporters predict, if it does manage to go forward, we would demand that all the manufacturing and development of the system be done in America.

Kinkisharyo has provided a successful manufacturing model, turning out rail cars that are being delivered to L.A. transit rail lines.

The California rail authority this year estimated that high-speed trains would cost about \$3.4 billion, making them one of the most expensive parts of the system.

Based on the success of Palmdale and Lancaster in attracting a Japanese firm and a Chinese company, electric vehicle manufacturer BYD, to establish highly productive factories here, it should be possible to attract U.S. or foreign companies to develop high-speed rail line manufacturing in the Antelope Valley.

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The attempt to win exemptions from the Buy American Act should be discontinued immediately.

This Valley could foster manufacturing for rail transit in the same way that we have been so successful as the global hub for the teeming aerospace industry.

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