



JPB Board of Directors  
Meeting of December 5, 2024

Correspondence as of November 8, 2024

# Subject

1. Re: Caltrain Horn Noises and Ongoing Construction – *Staff Response*

**From:** [Caltrain BOD Public Support Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)  
**To:** [Board \(@caltrain.com\)](#)  
**Subject:** Re: Caltrain Horn Noises and Ongoing Construction  
**Date:** Friday, November 8, 2024 10:13:37 AM

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**From:** Brent Tietjen <[TietjenB@caltrain.com](mailto:TietjenB@caltrain.com)>  
**Sent:** Friday, November 8, 2024 10:01 AM  
**To:** Navdeep Dhaliwal <[DhaliwalN@caltrain.com](mailto:DhaliwalN@caltrain.com)>;  
[rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org) <[rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Casey Fromson <[Fromsonc@caltrain.com](mailto:Fromsonc@caltrain.com)>; Jason Baker <[BakerJ@caltrain.com](mailto:BakerJ@caltrain.com)>  
**Subject:**

Hi Deputy Mayor Newsom Jr.,

I wanted to follow up on Navi's recent email, specifically regarding the adjustments to our train horns. Since Navi's last update, we have collaborated with Stadler, our train manufacturer, to successfully reduce the decibel levels of the horns. This process required more effort than initially anticipated, but I'm pleased to report that all 15 of our new trains on-site have now been adjusted and are currently testing in the 96-98 dB range. As Navi noted, federal regulations require train horns to operate between 96-108 decibels. Previously, our horns were testing toward the higher end of this range. As the decibel scale is logarithmic, residents should perceive a significant reduction in volume of the horns. Trains will continue to sound horns in compliance with federal and state laws, as well as Caltrain operating rules. However, we are hopeful these modifications will help reduce noise complaints.

Thank you for your attention and patience as we worked to implement these changes. If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Thanks,

Brent Tietjen

[tietjenb@caltrain.com](mailto:tietjenb@caltrain.com)

415-617-5614

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**From:** Navdeep Dhaliwal <[DhaliwalN@caltrain.com](mailto:DhaliwalN@caltrain.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, October 7, 2024 6:00 PM  
**To:** [rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org) <[rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org](mailto:rnewsom@cityofsanmateo.org)>  
**Cc:** Jason Baker <[BakerJ@caltrain.com](mailto:BakerJ@caltrain.com)>; Casey Fromson <[Fromsonc@caltrain.com](mailto:Fromsonc@caltrain.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: Caltrain Horn Noises and Ongoing Construction

Hello Deputy Mayor Newsom Jr.,

I want to thank you again for taking the time to come to our board meeting and share your

concerns during our public comment. I wanted to address some concerns raised by community members regarding the recent increase in train noise. We understand that San Mateo residents may be noticing an increase in train horn activity, which is due to the active construction work in the area.

Caltrain officials were made aware that some of our equipment was producing noise levels slightly above the lowest legal limit. We are currently taking corrective actions by adjusting the train horns to comply with the minimum requirements set by the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA). We anticipate all trains will be set back to the lowest legal limit by the end of the month.

As per FRA regulations, train horns must be sounded as a safety measure at public grade crossings and construction areas within the railroad's right-of-way. This is especially relevant during the ongoing construction of the San Mateo Parking Track. Given the proximity of the active construction project to Caltrain tracks, train operators are required to blow their horns to ensure the safety of workers and nearby residents. Once the project is complete, which we expect to occur by the end of the year, we anticipate a reduction in the frequency of the horns to normal levels.

I want to assure you that these concerns are being taken seriously, and we are working diligently to address them with the appropriate authorities. In the meantime, I will provide regular updates as new information becomes available. Thank you for your understanding, patience, and continued support in improving the rail infrastructure of San Mateo.

Sincerely,

**Navi Dhaliwal, MPPA**

**Acting, Government and Community Affairs Manager**

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Your Caltrain BOD Public Support Team