



AMERICAN SOCIETY OF CIVIL ENGINEERS
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2018 Student Scholarship Essay Competition ****UPDATED****

Contest Topic

California High Speed Rail

Background

During Governor Brown's sixteenth and final State of the State address, he encouraged Californians to 'be bold' and move forward with largely unpopular projects including the delta water supply tunnels and high speed rail, stating that completing 'Big Projects' inevitably mean absorbing cost and schedule over-runs.

Proposition 1A — the Safe, Reliable High-Speed Passenger Train Bond Act for the 21st Century — was approved by California voters in 2008 to allocate \$9.95 billion for the California High-Speed Rail Authority. Of that sum, voters were told \$9 billion would be used to construct core segments of the rail line from San Francisco to the Los Angeles area. Federal matching funds are needed since the bond covers only part of the estimated cost of the initial core segment. The nearly ten billion dollars in initial funding has been raised through general obligation bonds that are paid off over a period of 30 years.

As of January 2018, the estimated cost of the initial 119-mile section between Madera and Bakersfield has increased from \$6 billion to nearly \$11 billion, due to project delays and higher-than-anticipated construction costs. Serious questions remain as to how the state will complete the project, considered the largest public infrastructure investment in the country, with available funds.

Essay Prompt

As civil engineers we pledge to build safe and functional infrastructure for our communities with the highest professional and ethical standards. There are many important infrastructure needs in California besides a fast train from San Francisco to Los Angeles. Your essay should explore the potential costs of project completion, alternative ways to fund the project, the social and economic costs of project abandonment, and your respective opinions thereof.

**Last year 13 students received a total of \$13,350
with a grand prize of \$1,600***

*this year's prizes may vary

2018 ASCE STUDENT AWARDS CONTEST

1. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS OF AN AWARD RECIPIENT.

An Award Recipient Must:

- a. Be an undergraduate or graduate student in good standing in the Civil Engineering Department at San Jose State University, Santa Clara University, or Stanford University.
- b. Be a member of the ASCE Student Chapter or Club at the school at which he or she is enrolled and be a National Student Member of ASCE (National Membership is FREE!!! <http://www.asce.org>)
- c. Attend the Student Awards Banquet at Stanford University from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. on May 1.
- d. Fully comply with the submission rules below. Failure to comply with ANY of the contest rules may result in disqualification.

2. SUBMISSION RULES

To Be Considered For An Award, a Student Must:

- a. Submit an essay not to exceed **one page** in length addressing the essay subject outlined on the first page. Include only student's name and membership number on the one-page essay in the upper right hand corner (not your school name). Do not include a cover page or attachments.
- b. Submit a resume not to exceed one page in length, which may include the student's name, address, phone number, experience, interests, and coursework. **Clearly indicate student membership of National ASCE (provide membership number) AND the ASCE Student Chapter.**
- c. **DO NOT** include grade point average (GPA) or class standing anywhere in the essay or resume.
- d. Submit essay and resume in portable document format (PDF) via email to asce.essay@gmail.com by midnight Sunday April 8, 2018.
- e. Attend the Student Awards Banquet. Students should RSVP at the ASCE San Jose Branch website <http://branches.asce.org/sanjose/> **Students who participate in the essay competition must register for the banquet with a valid .edu email address. Participating students attend for free but guests must register as a professional.**
- f. **Students MUST check in at the banquet prior to 6:30pm to receive an award! Please plan accordingly.**

3. STUDENT AWARDS BANQUET – MUST ATTEND TO THE END TO WIN:

Date: **Tuesday May 1, 2018**
Time: **6:00PM to 9:00PM**
Location: **Stanford University**
Venue: **The GSB Common**