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Rep. Jerry McNerney, D-Pleasanton, introduced legislation on Wednesday to help fund the Altamont Corridor Rail Project, which would expand rail service between the Central Valley and Bay Area.

HR 1504, the Altamont Corridor Rail Improvement Act, would invest in a project designed to serve thousands of people, create jobs and reduce traffic along some of the region's most heavily traveled highways, McNerney said in a news release.

The Altamont Commuter Express runs weekday trains from the Central Valley to the Bay Area and shares tracks with freight trains and Amtrak. Use of these shared tracks limits travel speed and adds delays to the ACE system, McNerney said. The 85-mile corridor has the potential to carry 35,000 people each way and could cut commute time between Stockton and San Jose in half, McNerney said.

The bill authorizes the Secretary of Transportation to provide up to \$450 million in grants over the next decade for preliminary engineering, final design and construction. The bill is expected to be referred to the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.