



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street

San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

February 15, 2008

Maria Araiza Troutner
Cascabel Working Group
6590 N. Cascabel Road
Benson, AZ 85602

Dear Ms. Troutner and the Cascabel Working Group:

Thank you for your January 21st, 2008 letter to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) expressing your concerns with potential environmental impacts from the proposed I-10 Bypass Expressway (Project). As mentioned in your letter, this Project relates to the proposed bypass around Tucson and Phoenix for I-10 to relieve traffic congestion in those cities. Your letter indicates that you are concerned with potential impacts on land use, plants, animals, and the general ecology. The letter also expresses the Cascabel Working Group's intention to prepare 14 letters addressing a variety of specific concerns which would also respond to a number of assertions that have been made about the Project.

To date, EPA has not formally engaged on this Project and has had no coordination with state and local transportation agencies regarding this Project. We have conducted a cursory review of the I-10 Bypass Study and have contacted the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for additional information on the status of the Project as well as anticipated next steps. If this Project continues to move forward, EPA expects to evaluate the Project and provide formal comments in the future.

We look forward to learning more about this project from ADOT and FHWA and appreciate receiving information from the Cascabel Working Group. Please direct future correspondence related to this project, including the forthcoming letters referenced in your January 21st letter, to EPA's Region IX Environmental Review Office. Specifically, Tom Plenys, lead reviewer of highway projects for Arizona, should serve as the point of contact for all future communications and any questions about EPA's role in transportation projects in Arizona. His contact information is as follows:

Tom Plenys
U.S. EPA, Region IX
Environmental Review Office
75 Hawthorne Street, CED-2
San Francisco, CA 94105

Phone: 415-972-3238
Fax: 415-947-8026
Email: plenys.thomas@epa.gov

We thank you again for contacting EPA and appreciate the concerns that you have raised. In particular, we are encouraged by your investment in protecting community concerns and the resources of the State of Arizona.

Sincerely,


Nova Nova Blazej, Manager
Environmental Review Office

CC: Melissa Maifeski, Arizona Department of Transportation
Steve Thomas, Federal Highway Administration, Arizona Office
Kathleen Tucker, US Army Corps of Engineers
Ray Schweinsburg, Arizona Game and Fish Department
Debra Bills, US Fish and Wildlife Service