

Mr. Chairman, members of the Transportation Board, Director Mendez, Staff,
My name is Bob Evans and I live in Cascabel in the San Pedro River Valley, some 30 miles north of Benson.

I am here to speak in opposition to the bypass; not just the bypass that might go through the San Pedro Valley, but all of the proposed routes. Mr. Chairman, I believe that the Board is studying the wrong thing for the wrong reasons. Instead of looking for places to build highways to accommodate more trucks, perhaps we should be looking for ways to get the trucks off the highways that we have.

One stated purpose of a bypass is to relieve congestion on I-10 as it passes through Tucson and Phoenix. We know now that the routes that have been proposed will do little to relieve congestion in either of these cities because at least 90 percent of this traffic is local, and none of the proposed bypass routes will alleviate this problem. And yet, this remains as one of the stated reasons for building a bypass. One can only wonder why.

Any and all of the proposed routes will lead to urban sprawl, which will eventually lead to even greater congestion. The construction of a highway through large expanses of undeveloped land will bring with it truck stops and other service facilities, and these will be followed by housing developments and shopping facilities to serve this new population. The resulting congestion as this new metropolitan area grows, will lead to the need for bypasses to reduce the congestion on what was once a bypass. Instead of relieving congestion, we will increase it, and distribute it over a wider area. Is this really what we want?

To build this new highway, ADOT will be using state and federal money, my tax money, to promote future urban development and enable urban sprawl. I believe that my tax money should not be used to support the private industries which are in the business of building houses and shopping centers in what is now pristine undeveloped land.

The building of these highways, and the existence of those highways through time, along with the urban development that will follow, will destroy pristine areas, interfere with the movement of wildlife, and bring about a dramatic and irreversible reduction in the quality of life of the people who now live near those proposed routes.

I applaud the ADOT Board for having the foresight to look ahead into the future and try to anticipate the kinds of problems that will face our citizens in 20 to 40 years. I do not however, believe that the Board should limit its vision to simply building more highways. Any solution to future transportation problems must include the following: increase the carrying capacity of Interstate 10 to the maximum possible, by widening, and by double decking; increase the use of rail, and discourage the use of trucks to move freight across the state; and find alternatives to the individual automobile as the primary way to move commuters. If you are going to spend tax money to conduct studies, these are the kinds of things that I believe should be studied, not building highways through undeveloped land.

Thank you.