

Robert McClure's talk for the STB meeting on December 21, 2007

Let me introduce myself. I am Bob McClure, a 10 year resident of Cascabel, a member of the Cascabel Working Group, and a retired engineer. I have a degree in Mathematics and a Doctorate in engineering from the University of Texas. My experience is both in academia and in industry. Prior to retirement I was in the consulting business for more than 30 years. Since I know how consulting firms work, I commend URS for a first class try at supporting the unsupportable.

In my opinion, the URS study was not only preliminary, but it was inaccurate, inadequate, and superficial. On behalf of the Cascabel Working Group I have prepared a detailed review of this study which has been delivered to the State Transportation Board and other parties.

The most obvious flaw in the proposed new expressway is that it will do almost nothing to relieve traffic congestion in Tucson or Phoenix. The URS report finds that relief to be less than 10% for either the route through the San Pedro River Valley or the Aravaipa Valley.

URS estimates the cost of the new 250 mile expressway at \$6-8 billion. From a study done by the Washington Department of Transportation, I expect it to cost at least \$9 billion, and possibly much more.

The cost in energy to construct this highway will be enormous. Using industry standards, it will require the equivalent of 720 million gallons of gasoline. Given expected traffic and the minimal saving in distance, it will take just over 66 years to break even on energy consumption.

There is no funding available from either state or federal government. A toll road is not a reasonable possibility as it will require a toll of \$100 per trip just to pay the interest on the capital required.

There is no need for an alternate route to I-10. Very little of I-10 from California to the Atlantic has an alternate route. Tucson is not even the largest city with no expressway alternate route. Specifically, El Paso, Texas with a greater population than Tucson has none; nor does Mobile, Alabama. No city along I-10 has a bypass remotely close to 135 miles in length.

The projected population growth in Arizona is suspect. Such a sustained rate of growth is a historical anomaly, having only occurred in California as a result of the massive population movements caused by World War II. As URS notes, most of the growth is expected to occur between Tucson and Phoenix. Clearly these people will be far more interested in going to either Tucson or Phoenix than New Mexico or California.

Finally, no consideration was given to strictly local options for traffic relief. This is a major flaw.

We will be pleased to supply a copy of our full review of the URS report to any interested party.