

March 24, 2008

Cascabel Working Group
6590 N. Cascabel Road
Benson, AZ 85602

Dear Cascabel Working Group:

You have my permission to publicly display or distribute the following text of my letters that were given to the State Transportation Board members, just before the start of their 21 March 2008 meeting in Tucson:

The I-10 Phoenix-Tucson Bypass Study Final Report (URS Corporation, January 2008) specifies, on page ES-2, that an I-10 bypass is needed to: 1) relieve Phoenix and Tucson traffic congestion; 2) provide a shorter, faster route; 3) provide an alternative route; and, 4) serve expected population growth. Please consider the following reasons that San Pedro and Aravaipa routes do not satisfy these criteria.

First of all, these routes would not significantly reduce Tucson traffic. The Final Report states that these routes would reduce Tucson I-10 traffic by only 7% in the year 2030 [page ES-9]. This reduction would be less than 5%, if based on the Pima Association of Governments traffic forecast [page ES-7].

Second, San Pedro and Aravaipa routes would be unjustifiable and unacceptable shortcuts. The small distance savings of 4 to 10% [page ES-10] would not justify the enormous social, environmental, economic, and financial costs of these routes. Furthermore, almost all of the Public Meeting attendees think that there is no distance savings great enough to justify a highway in these rare and treasured areas for which Arizona is renowned and loved. At the November 29 meeting in Tucson, Mr. Buskirk estimated that 95% of the Public Meeting attendees were opposed to these bypasses. Even the truckers don't want these routes (Arizona Trucking Association, Puerto Nuevo [Final Report, page 3-8]).

Third, San Pedro and Aravaipa routes would be ineffective and unnecessary alternatives to I-10. The Final Report states that because these routes would be accessed near Willcox and Casa Grande, they "would only apply to long distance and through trips" [page ES-10]. Therefore, these routes would not serve the congested urban segments of I-10, where incidents and severe traffic disruption are most likely to occur. It's also important to realize that an emergency alternative route to I-10 already exists, consisting of US Highways 191, 70, and 60 (essentially, one of the original routes that was proposed for the bypass ["Initial Potential Corridors", Figure 3.5, page 3-7]).

Finally, present conditions indicate that a route through the San Pedro or Aravaipa would cause much more growth than it would serve. A future need for this route is unproven, and can not be proven with population projections. These projections only consider past conditions to predict the population of a future Arizona that will have very different and unpredictable conditions. Please remember that no matter how they are packaged, population projections are just guesses. The reported projection ["Arizona's Future", Figure 1.1, page 1-5] of a 2050 Arizona population of 16 million is a guess, based only on past rates of birth, death, and migration. Some might bet on this guess, because they believe that Arizona's explosive growth will continue for more than forty years. But with a future that includes limited resources, war, debt, and climate change, that's not a good bet. Population guesses should not be used to justify any bypass route.

Thank you,
Jon Sjogren