



GRAHAM COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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James A. Palmer, Chairman
Mark C. Herrington, Member
Drew John, Member

TERRY COOPER, COUNTY MANAGER/CLERK

Diana Wood
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

E1-7063
Dtw
FD 34836

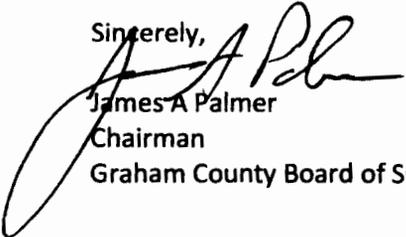
Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34836

March 31, 2008

Dear Ms. Wood:

My name is James Palmer, and I am the chairman of the Graham County Board of Supervisors in Graham County Arizona. I am writing in regards to STB Finance Docket No. 34836, which is the proposed Arizona Eastern Railroad line that would extend from the current line to the new Freeport Copper & Gold Safford Mine site. I have been on record as supporting this railroad spur and I still do support the building of this spur to take a huge amount of truck traffic off of our state and local highways. I do however have several concerns that I would like to comment on concerning this project. From the beginning of this project, the railroad has been in communication with the property owners that the line would cross in order to get to the mine site, however when the plans were actually provided to one of the property owners, Mr. Claridge, they did not even resemble any of the conversations or agreements that had occurred verbally in their previous meetings. The rite-of-way had grown to a width of 500 feet, which is completely unnecessary for building this line. The route has changed from the one agreed on that would have minimally impacted their property to one that in some instances completely rendered some parcels unusable. There are 5 irrigation wells in the proposed area, that it was agreed would still be accessible and usable by the owner and now they are shown to be capped by the railroad. We live in a desert river valley, and water is the life blood of our farms and our communities, and capping wells is not an acceptable solution. As I mentioned, while I do support building this rail line, I want the railroad to get back to the table with the property owner and work out a route and a solution to the concerns of the property owner that will be beneficial to both the railroad and the property owner. This land has been in this family for many generations, and in the more that 100 years that they have worked this land, they have gained an understanding of the two rivers that affect the railroad and how they can best be negotiated in a way that would benefit all parties involved. If this is done the environmental impacts of crossing and running next to these rivers would be minimal and all could benefit. Please consider these comments and send the parties to the negotiating table to work out equitable solutions to these issues. Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,


James A Palmer
Chairman

Graham County Board of Supervisors