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JAN 10 2008

John Cook AICP, Senior Associate
135 Main Street, Suite 1600
San Francisco, California 94105

Dear Mr. Cook:

This response is in regard to your email dated December 11, 2007, requesting information regarding the presence of prime and unique land status for the proposed freight railroad to spur from an existing Arizona Eastern Railroad near Safford and Solomon in Graham County, Arizona.

We reviewed the information provided, including the NRCS-CPA-106, and completed our portion of the form. It is enclosed with this response. The following is noted:

- 1 - The project proposal contains 24.63 acres of land that meets the definition of prime farmland. However, the sum of the assessment criteria in Part VI and the I-and Evaluation relative value in Part V is 138. Sum values less than 160 are considered as land already committed to urban uses. Therefore, the proposed new project, if implemented as planned, is exempt from the requirements of the fPPA and no further mitigation activities are required. A summary report of the soils for your defined corridor has been provided for your analysis and later use, if need be. The report includes a discussion of the soil types and their relative agricultural productivity.
- 2 - We do not see any immediate concerns or impacts that would directly affect wetland areas associated with agriculture.

We recommend that any future development projects receive a prime farmland determination prior to any construction activities. Should you have questions, please feel free contact Steve Smarik,, Environmental Coordinator, at 602.280.8785 or at the address shown above.

Thank you again for the chance to review the proposed project.

Sincerely,



ERIC BANKS
Assistant State Conservationist (P-FA)

Enclosure

cc:

Jennifer Varin, DC, Safford, Arizona
Steve Smarik, Environmental Coordinator, NRCS, Phoenix, AZ.

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