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U.S. Department of Homeland Security
FEMA Region IX
1111 Broadway, Suite 1200
Oakland, CA. 94607-4052



FEMA

January 30, 2007

Scott Steinwert
Circle Point
135 Main Street, Suite 1600
San Francisco, California 94105

Dear Mr. Steinwert:

This is in response to your request for comments on the Potential Environmental Impacts – STB Finance Docket No. 34836, Arizona Eastern Railway – Construction and Operation – In Graham County, Arizona project.

Please review the current effective Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the County of Graham (Community Number 040032, Map Revised July 3, 1997. Please note that the County of Graham, Arizona is a participant in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). The minimum, basic NFIP floodplain management building requirements are described in Vol. 44 Code of Federal Regulations (44 CFR), Sections 59 through 65.

A summary of these NFIP floodplain management building requirements are as follows:

- All buildings constructed within a riverine floodplain, (i.e., Flood Zones A, AO, AH, AE, and A1 through A30 as delineated on the FIRM), must be elevated so that the lowest floor is at or above the Base Flood Elevation level in accordance with the effective Flood Insurance Rate Map.
- If the area of construction is located within a Regulatory Floodway as delineated on the FIRM, any **development** must not increase base flood elevation levels. **The term development means any man-made change to improved or unimproved real estate, including but not limited to buildings, other structures, mining, dredging, filling, grading, paving, excavation or drilling operations, and storage of equipment or materials.** A hydrologic and hydraulic analysis must be performed *prior* to the start of development, and must demonstrate that the development would not cause any rise in base flood levels. No rise is permitted within regulatory floodways.

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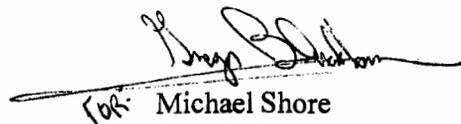
- All buildings constructed within a coastal high hazard area, (any of the "V" Flood Zones as delineated on the FIRM), must be elevated on pilings and columns, so that the lowest horizontal structural member, (excluding the pilings and columns), is elevated to or above the base flood elevation level. In addition, the posts and pilings foundation and the structure attached thereto, is anchored to resist flotation, collapse and lateral movement due to the effects of wind and water loads acting simultaneously on all building components.
- Upon completion of any development that changes existing Special Flood Hazard Areas, the NFIP directs all participating communities to submit the appropriate hydrologic and hydraulic data to FEMA for a FIRM revision. In accordance with 44 CFR, Section 65.3, as soon as practicable, but not later than six months after such data becomes available, a community shall notify FEMA of the changes by submitting technical data for a flood map revision. To obtain copies of FEMA's Flood Map Revision Application Packages, please refer to the FEMA website at <http://www.fema.gov/business/nfip/forms.shtm>.

Please Note:

Many NFIP participating communities have adopted floodplain management building requirements which are more restrictive than the minimum federal standards described in 44 CFR. Please contact the local community's floodplain manager for more information on local floodplain management building requirements. The Graham County floodplain manager can be reached by calling John R. Ward, Floodplain Administrator at (602) 428-0410.

If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to call Todd Smith of my staff at (510) 627-7235.

Sincerely,


for Michael Shore
Branch Chief
Community Mitigation Programs

cc:

John R. Ward, Floodplain Administrator, Graham County Planning Department

Diana Wood, SEA – Project Manager

Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis

Brian Cosson, CFM, NFIP State Coordinator, Arizona Department of Water Resources

Todd Smith, Floodplanner, DHS/FEMA, Region IX

Alessandro Amaglio, Environmental Officer, DHS/FEMA, Region IX