



**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
**Washington, DC 20423**

*Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration*

September 5, 2006

Brian Armstrong, Airports District Office Manager  
Federal Aviation Administration  
FAA Western Pacific Region, Airports Division-LAX-600  
P.O. Box 92007  
Los Angeles, CA 90009-2007

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34836, Arizona Eastern Railway – Construction and  
Operation – In Graham County, Arizona;  
Request for Comments on Potential Environmental Impacts

Dear Mr. Armstrong:

On August 4, 2006, the Arizona Eastern Railway (AZER) filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) requesting authority to construct and operate a 10-mile rail line in Graham County, Arizona (see Figure 1, enclosed). This proposed rail line would connect Phelps Dodge's proposed San Juan mining operation with an existing 133.5-mile AZER line that operates between Miami and Bowie, AZ, then connects with a line of the Union Pacific Railroad (UP). AZER anticipates that the line would handle about 5,000 carloads annually, or one round trip per day at 15 to 20 carloads per trip, six days per week. Commodities to be handled include sulfur and sulfuric acid in tank cars and copper cathodes in boxcars. According to AZER, this traffic represents new business, which would move directly by rail from Phelps Dodge's mine and processing facility.

Pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 as amended (NEPA) and the Board's environmental rules, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) will prepare an environmental document that evaluates the potential environmental effects of the proposed project and the reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposal including the no-build alternative. The purpose of this letter is to request information from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project, as well as any permits and approvals that may be required.

This letter begins the process by which SEA will assess the potential environmental effects, both positive and negative, that may be associated with the proposed rail line construction and operation. We appreciate your assistance in identifying whether resources of concern to your agency may be affected by the proposed project. We would appreciate receiving

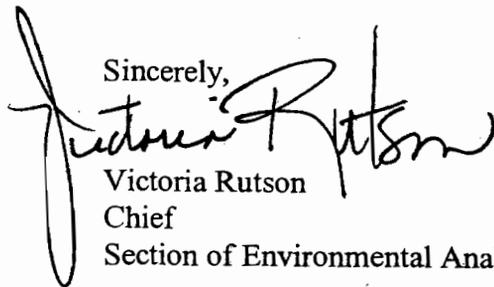
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your response within 30 days after delivery of this letter, in order to incorporate your comments into the scope of the study, as appropriate.

CirclePoint is serving as SEA's independent third-party consultant in this proceeding, and will assist SEA in the preparation of the environmental document. Please send your comments to:

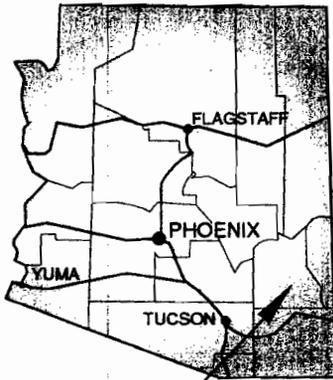
Mr. Scott Steinwert  
CirclePoint  
135 Main Street, Suite 1600  
San Francisco, CA 94105

We would appreciate receiving your comments by October 6, 2006. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Scott Steinwert, Project Manager for CirclePoint at 415-227-1100, ext 117, or Diana Wood, SEA Project Manager at 202-565-1552

Sincerely,  
  
Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis

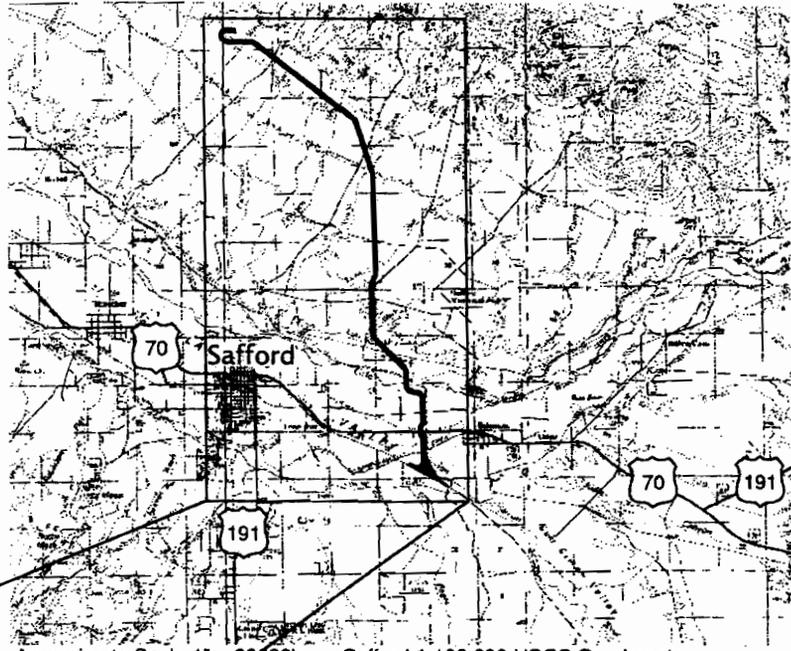
Enclosure

# ARIZONA

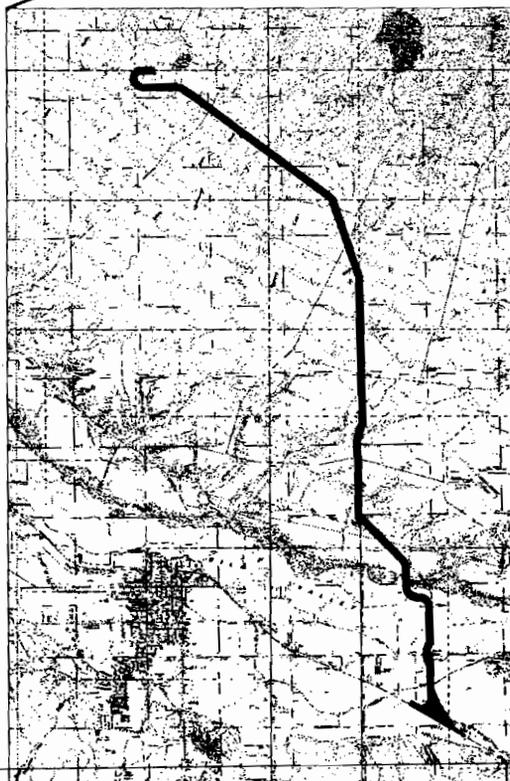


PROJECT  
LOCATION

## Portion of Graham County



Approximate Scale 1" = 20000' Safford 1:100,000 USGS Quadrangle.



T.6S.,R.26E., Portion Sections 5,6,8,9,10,15,22,23,26,34 & 35.  
T.7S.,R.26E., Portion Sections 3,11,14, 23, 24,& 25.  
Graham County, Arizona,  
Weber Peak & Safford 1:24,000 USGS Quadrangles.

0' 6800' 13600'  
APPROX. SCALE: 1" = 13600'



## PROPOSED ALIGNMENT ARIZONA EASTERN SAFFORD BRANCH PROJECT

VICINITY MAP  
Figure 1

DWG FullPath: M:\projects\1378.01\VICINITY.dwg

**WestLand Resources Inc.**  
Engineering and Environmental Consultants  
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