



U. S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE.
Washington, D.C. 20590

August 27, 2010

RE: DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Supplemental Draft EIS and Draft 4(f) Evaluation

Dear Sir/Madam:

In March 2009, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) published a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Project (Project) in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Surface Transportation Board (STB), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the National Park Service (NPS), with the added participation of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT). The Project is proposed by DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC. (Applicant) to provide reliable and safe passenger rail transportation along an approximate 200-mile corridor between Southern California (Victorville) and Las Vegas, providing an alternative to automobile or air travel. The Project would use proven high-speed rail technology and be constructed as a grade-separated, dedicated double track, passenger-only railroad primarily within the Interstate 15 rights-of-way, adding transportation capacity to the freeway corridor.

Following the publication of the Draft EIS for the Project, the Applicant proposed several Project modifications and additions to address substantive comments received during public and agency review of the Draft EIS and to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects. The proposed Project modifications and additions include a new Victorville passenger station site option, a Barstow area rail alignment following I-15 from Lenwood through Yermo, a new rail alignment through the Clark Mountains near the Mojave National Preserve, new sites for maintenance and operation facilities in unincorporated Clark County, relocation of portions of the rail alignment in metropolitan Las Vegas from the immediate I-15 corridor to the Industrial Road/Dean Martin Drive corridor, and other minor shifts in the rail alignment to avoid or reduce environmental effects or improve operating characteristics of the rail service.

The Supplemental Draft EIS and Draft 4(f) Evaluation that accompanies this letter identifies and analyzes the potential environmental impacts (both beneficial and adverse) that could occur to a range of environmental resources as a result of the proposed Project modifications and additions. The Executive Summary at pages ES-5 to ES-39 summarizes the impacts of the Project modifications and additions. Mitigation has been described in the Supplemental Draft EIS that would address the identified impacts.

The Supplemental Draft EIS is being made available to the public in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act for comment through October 18, 2010. In addition, the FRA will hold two public hearings on the Supplemental Draft EIS, on October 13 in Las Vegas, NV and October 14 in Lenwood, CA. Details regarding the locations, dates, and times of hearings will be posted on the FRA Web Site (<http://www.fra.dot.gov/us/content/1703>), and notices will be mailed to interested parties and published in

newspapers of general circulation.

Comments on this Supplemental Draft EIS should be sent by 5:00 PM Eastern Time on October 18, 2010 to the FRA by email to Wendy.Messenger@dot.gov with the subject line, "DesertXpress SDEIS" or by mail addressed to the:

Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E. MS-20
Washington, DC 20590
Attn: DesertXpress SDEIS

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Messenger". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "W" and "M".

Wendy Messenger
Environmental Protection Specialist
DesertXpress Project Manager