



EI-18002

CG

U.S. Department
of Transportation

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

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

Ms. Cara McDonald
Cultural Lead
Chemehuevi Reservation
P.O. Box 1976
Havasu Lake, CA 92363

DEC 17 2009

RE: DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Project

Dear Ms. McDonald:

As detailed in previous communications, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is serving as the lead federal agency for the environmental review of the DesertXpress project. The purpose of this letter is to notify you that FRA representatives will be conducting site visits and will meet with interested Tribes in the beginning of January.

The DesertXpress project is proposed by DesertXpress Enterprises, LLC to provide reliable and safe passenger rail transportation along an approximate 200-mile corridor between Southern California (Victorville) and Las Vegas, as an alternative to automobile or air travel. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Surface Transportation Board (STB), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the National Park Service (NPS) are cooperating federal agencies in this process, with the added participation of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT).

Tribal consultation was initiated by FRA in a letter sent to each potentially interested Tribe dated March 8, 2007. That letter summarized the project, informed you that FRA was initiating cultural resource studies, and requested your participation in government-to-government consultation. To date, FRA has conducted a formal scoping process and prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the project, which was provided to you in March 2009, and included cultural resources studies for the project area. In addition, FRA provided you with a draft Programmatic Agreement (PA) governing the Section 106 process for the project in October 2009. FRA requests your continued participation in consultation on a government-to-government basis to review the findings of the cultural resource studies and identify traditional cultural properties, sacred sites, resource collecting areas, or any other areas that may be of concern to your Tribe and to provide your comments on the PA. FRA will ensure that any information that you provide to us will remain subject to the confidentiality provisions of National Historic Preservation Act (Section 304).

FRA will be available to meet with you for continued consultation to discuss any concerns you may have with the proposed DesertXpress project and the PA on January 6-8, 2010, in the project area, as follows:

- Wednesday, January 6th – field visits to four sites within the project area on which FRA is requesting Tribal consultation. The site tour will originate in Barstow, CA and we will travel north along the project route to Nipton, CA. A map depicting this route for the site visits is enclosed. We anticipate this tour will take the full day.

- Thursday, January 7th – FRA will be available in the morning to meet with interested Tribes at the BLM Barstow office.
- Friday, January 8th – FRA will be available to meet with interested Tribes at the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians' office in Highland, CA.

If you are interested in participating in these meetings or the site visit, we ask that you contact Wendy Messenger at Wendy.Messenger@dot.gov or (202) 493-6396 no later than Monday, January 4, 2010 to confirm your participation and receive further details regarding the meetings.

In addition, you may contact me directly should you have any concerns or questions regarding the overall environmental process at david.valenstein@dot.gov or (202) 493-6368.

Sincerely,



David Valenstein
Environmental Program Manager

CC: C. Glidden – STB
M. Quillman – BLM
S. Oliver – FHWA
L. Whalon – NPS
M. Bever – ICF-J&S
J. Cook – CirclePoint
A. Baldrice – NV SHPO
M. Donaldson – CA SHPO

Enclosure



K:\San Diego\projects\CirclePoint temp\Mapdoc\Misc and mapbook mxds\MapOvr1 for FRA 121109

Source: ESRI Imagery (2008)

Overview Map
Tribal Field Visit
DesertXpress