



RICHARD ELÍAS
CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD
COUNTY SUPERVISOR - DISTRICT 5

PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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To Whom it May Concern:

The Pima County Board of Supervisors adopted Resolution No. 2007-343 on December 18, 2007, setting forth its opposition to construction of an interstate highway through "invaluable Sonoran Desert areas." That remains the official position of Pima County government.

At the time, the proposal under consideration was for an Interstate 10 Bypass Freeway, but it was along the same suggested routes as the currently proposed Interstate 11. A "favored" route then, as now, was through Avra Valley.

A freeway through the Avra Valley or other parts of the delicate Sonoran Desert is not compatible with the county's landmark Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan or with its Sustainability Plan to combat climate change in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement.

A freeway would destroy sensitive habitat for many of the 44 unique species of concern that the Conservation Plan protects. It would sever vital wildlife corridors between critical habitat areas of some of the larger species such as the Desert Bighorn.

The Sustainability Plan aims to steer the county government operations away from fossil fuel use and dependency, and a new freeway would promote increased fossil-fuel use, to the detriment of our air quality as well as to climate change.

A freeway through Avra Valley would impact severely and negatively such jewels and tourist areas as Tucson Mountain Park, Saguaro National Park, Ironwood National Monument, and the Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum. It would diminish vastly the quality of life of thousands of Avra Valley residents.

The cost of buying land for and building an entirely new freeway would be tremendous, when we do not have enough funds to maintain properly our existing roads and highways. It would cost much less to improve existing railroad corridors for cleaner passenger rail service and increased freight traffic.

An Interstate 11 would divert traffic away from existing businesses that depend on Interstate 10 and Interstate 19 traffic visibility for their survival.

A new freeway through any pristine Sonoran Desert area, and especially through Avra Valley, still is a very bad idea and the Pima County Board of Supervisors remains officially opposed to it.

Sincerely,

Richard Elías, Chairman
Pima County Board of Supervisors


Sharon Bronson, District Three Supervisor
Pima County Board of Supervisors