

Board of Supervisors

Santa Cruz County



JOHN MAYNARD
District 3

February 17, 2010

The Honorable Gabrielle Giffords
United States House of Representatives
1410 LHOB
Washington, D.C. 20510

ATTN: Liz Berry

RE: Palo Parado Road and Bridge Project

Dear Representative Giffords:

As Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, I am writing on behalf of Santa Cruz County to seek your support in requesting federal funding for the Palo Parado Road and Bridge project ("the Project"). This Project was voted upon and has the unanimous support of the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors. The funds that are being requested will be used to construct a much-needed road, bridge, riverbank improvements, and railroad crossing between Interstate-19 and Pendleton Drive.

The total Project cost is estimated to be \$9.1 Million. The Project will include .67 miles of asphalt, an 800-foot bridge span, 2300 feet of riverbank protection, and a controlled signalized railroad crossing. Santa Cruz County will provide \$1.82 Million (20%) in local funds and is seeking \$7.28 Million (80%) in federal funds. The County does not anticipate the need for additional funding from federal, state, or local sources.

The Project is located in the Rio Rico community. Rio Rico began as land-sale "master" development in the late 1960s. At the time, the County had very few regulations and the State was just beginning to regulate subdivisions and require public disclosure. This platted subdivision, which included over 33,000 lots, filed for bankruptcy protection in the early 1970s. The court required that certain improvements, such as water and power be provided, but did not go as far as to require road and bridge improvements. Now, thirty-five years later, this community has grown to approximately 25,000 residents and only has one bridge over the Santa Cruz River and one signalized railroad crossing over the Union Pacific Railway to allow people in and out of the area.

Consequently, residents began using a primitive dirt road, Palo Parado, to cross the railroad tracks and the Santa Cruz River to reduce travel time and access Interstate 19. Recently, the Arizona Department of Transportation evaluated the railroad crossing and ranked it as one of the most dangerous crossings in the State. Currently, it is not equipped with any warning lights or crossing arms although it has an average daily traffic count of over 1,400 vehicles. Union Pacific did attempt to close this crossing but area residents petitioned the Board of Supervisors to keep this access open citing concerns over emergency services. The Board of Supervisors has had numerous public meetings on this Project. The County has worked, and will continue to work closely with the residents of the Rio Rico community on this Project.

The Project serves to benefit many of your constituents in your Congressional District although the project site is just outside of your southern district boundary. We are seeking your support as the primary sponsor of this Project and we will also be seeking the support of Congressman Grijalva for this Project, as well.

Sincerely,



John C. Maynard
Chairman