

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

County Leaders Warn Citizens of Alarming Road Proposal from the Bureau of Land Management, Urge Public Comment

Washington County, Utah - May 9, 2024 - The Biden Administration has taken over the role of traffic planner for our relatively small, but rapidly growing community. Today, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) released a Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (Draft SEIS) that considers revoking the existing right-of-way granted to the State of Utah that allows construction of the 4-mile Northern Corridor roadway that will connect Washington Parkway to Red Hills Parkway. This document reconsiders several possible options for where that roadway will be built, if built at all. The BLM is taking public input on the Draft SEIS until June 24, 2024, and Washington County will provide a model comment in favor of keeping the existing right-of-way and environmental protections in place on its website early next week.

Officials from Washington County and the impacted cities are united in support of building the Northern Corridor roadway using the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) Alternative, which is laid out in the Draft SEIS. This and the T-Bone Mesa Alignment are the only viable alternatives for our county's transportation system. Washington County residents are urged to comment in support of the Northern Corridor Roadway and the UDOT Alignment. **!**

"The Northern Corridor crossing a small portion of the Red Cliffs National Conservation was pre-approved by Congress and President Obama in 2009. We have been studying, planning, and fighting for this highway for over fifteen years," Washington County Commissioner Adam Snow emphasized. "The Northern Corridor is absolutely critical to our county. It must be built and it must be built the right way."

"The Biden-led BLM's approach on this important issue has been beyond frustrating," Washington County Attorney Eric Clarke added. "Rather than supporting the existing right-of-way, which has been amply studied, the BLM is promoting half-baked concepts that will significantly harm the quality of life for Washington County's human and Mojave desert tortoise populations alike."

The BLM's public comment period is crucial for citizens that live in Washington County (and will actually drive on this road) to voice their opinions. In the past, thousands of comments from individuals outside our community have flooded into these discussions, often overshadowing the voices of those who will directly feel the impacts of this decision. We are urging Washington County residents to seize this opportunity and make their voices heard, ensuring that their concerns and perspectives are not drowned out by national fringe groups.

We encourage all residents to submit their comments and share this information with their friends and neighbors.

Here are some key points for consideration:

1. Fulfilling Promises Made:

In 2009, members of Congress, state, and local officials all understood that creating the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area would not prevent construction of the Northern Corridor. However, 14 years later, this commitment remains unfulfilled. It's time to hold decision-makers accountable and ensure that the promises made to our community are honored.

2. Other alternatives laid out in the plan lack current data. Despite the Biden Administration inserting itself in local cities' transportation planning, the BLM has not had a single traffic engineer working on this project or developing the various alternative traffic plans. Additionally, the BLM refused to wait a few weeks before releasing the draft-EIS until updated traffic modeling could be completed on each of the alternatives. Costs and impacts have not been fully analyzed.

The Biden administration is simply trying to ram this project through in an election year to appease environmental groups, at the cost of Washington County's way of life.

3. Addressing Traffic Congestion and Air Pollution:

Traffic congestion in Washington County will increase air pollution, negatively impacting the health and well-being of our residents. The Northern Corridor project is crucial in alleviating this congestion and reducing pollution, making our community safer and healthier.

4. Reducing Traffic Accidents

Backlogs and inefficiencies in our current transportation system have resulted in a significant increase in traffic accidents. The Northern Corridor (UDOT Alternative) will provide a safer and more efficient route, reducing the risk of accidents and saving lives.

5. Protecting the Mojave Desert Tortoise:

Contrary to misconceptions, the UDOT Alternative for the Northern Corridor expanded protections to the Bearclaw Poppy Trail and Green Valley Gap areas. The Draft SEIS makes it clear that if BLM revokes the existing right-of-way, it will simultaneously lift protections on over 3,300 acres of high-quality tortoise habitat.

We urge all Washington County residents to take part in this important process by submitting their comments and opinions. Let's ensure that our community's voice is heard loud and clear.

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