

Dated: August 31, 2010.

Thomas M. Countryman,

*Acting Assistant Secretary, Bureau of
Political-Military Affairs, Department of
State.*

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Railroad Administration

Notice of Availability of a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Rail Project

AGENCY: Federal Railroad
Administration (FRA), United States
Department of Transportation (DOT).

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: FRA is issuing this notice to advise the public that a Supplemental Draft EIS has been prepared for the DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Project (Project). FRA is the lead agency for the environmental review process and has prepared the Supplemental Draft EIS consistent with the provisions of Section 102(2)(c) of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), the Counsel of Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations implementing NEPA (40 CFR parts 1500 *et seq.*) and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts (64 FR 28545; May 26, 1999).

DesertXpress Enterprises Inc., the Project proponent, proposes to construct and operate a fully grade-separated, dedicated double-track, passenger-only railroad along an approximately 200-mile corridor, from Victorville, CA, to Las Vegas, NV. After publication of the Draft EIS and in response to substantive comments submitted by interested agencies and the public, the Project proponent proposed several project modifications and additions. After reviewing the proposed project modifications and additions, FRA determined a Supplemental Draft EIS describing the potential environmental effects of the modifications and additions was necessary to fulfill its responsibility under NEPA.

DATES: Written comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS for the DesertXpress Project should be provided to FRA on or before October 18 2010. Public hearings are scheduled on October 13 and October 14, 2010, at the times and dates listed in the Addresses Section below in Las Vegas, NV and Barstow, CA.

ADDRESSES: Written comments on the Supplemental Draft EIS should be sent to Ms. Wendy Messenger, Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of Railroad Policy and Development, ATTN: DesertXpress EIS, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., MS-20, Washington, DC 20590 or via e-mail with the subject line DesertXpress EIS to Wendy.Messenger@dot.gov. Comments may also be provided orally or in writing at the public hearings scheduled at the following locations:

- Las Vegas, NV, Wednesday, October 13, 2010, 5:30 to 8 p. m., Hampton Inn Tropicana, SW. Event Center B, 4975 Dean Martin Drive, Las Vegas, NV; and
- Barstow, CA, Thursday, October 14, 2010, 5:30 to 8 p.m., Lenwood Hampton Inn, Jackrabbit Room 1, 2710 Lenwood Road, Barstow, CA.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Wendy Messenger, Environmental Protection Specialist, Office of Railroad Policy and Development, Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., MS-20, Washington, DC 20590 (telephone: 202-493-6396).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Following the March 18, 2009 publication of the Draft EIS on the Project, several project modifications and additions were proposed to address substantive comments received during public and agency review of the Draft EIS and to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects. After evaluating the proposed project modifications and additions, FRA determined, pursuant to 40 CFR 1502.9, that it was necessary to prepare a supplement to the Draft EIS analyzing the potential environmental impacts that might result from those modifications and additions. Therefore, in compliance with CEQ's regulations and FRA's Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts, FRA, in cooperation with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Surface Transportation Board (STB), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), and the National Park Service (NPS), and with the added participation of the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Nevada Department of Transportation (NDOT), prepared a Supplemental Draft EIS.

The Project would involve the construction and operation of an interstate high-speed passenger train system between Victorville, CA and Las Vegas, NV, along an approximately 200-mile corridor. The project proponent proposes to construct nearly the entire

fully grade-separated, dedicated double-track, passenger-only railroad either in the median of, or immediately alongside, Interstate-15 (I-15).

The proposed project modifications and additions do not in any way change the underlying purpose of, or need for, the project. The need for high-speed passenger rail service arises from several factors, including high and increasing travel demand with limited increases in capacity on I-15, constraints to the expansion of air travel, and frequent highway vehicle accidents on the I-15 corridor. The DesertXpress high-speed passenger train is intended to provide reliable and safe passenger rail transportation using proven high-speed rail technology that would be a convenient alternative to automobile travel on I-15 or air travel to and from Las Vegas, and that would add transportation capacity along the I-15 corridor.

Consistent with the requirements of NEPA, the Supplemental Draft EIS evaluates the environmental effects of the proposed modifications and additions, which include a new Victorville passenger station option at Dale Evans Parkway, a rail alignment through the Barstow area following the I-15 freeway corridor from Lenwood through Yermo, CA, a new rail alignment through the Clark Mountains near the Mojave National Preserve, new sites for maintenance and operation facilities in unincorporated Clark County, NV, 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 several alignment modifications to reduce or avoid environmental impacts, improve operating characteristics, or avoid conflicts with other planned projects.

Copies of both the Supplemental Draft EIS and Draft EIS are available online at FRA's Web site: <http://www.fra.dot.gov>; they are also available for viewing at the following locations near the planned rail system:

- Victorville City Library, 15011 Circle Drive, Victorville, CA 92395;
- Barstow Library, 304 East Buena Vista, Barstow, CA 92311;
- Clark County Library, 1401 E. Flamingo Road, Las Vegas, NV 89119; and
- Las Vegas Library, 833 Las Vegas Blvd. N., Las Vegas, NV 80101.

Issued in Washington, DC, on September 1, 2010.

Mark E. Yachmetz,
*Associate Administrator for Railroad Policy
& Development.*

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Research and Innovative Technology Administration

Advisory Council on Transportation Statistics; Notice of Meeting

AGENCY: Research and Innovative
Technology Administration, U.S.
Department of Transportation.

ACTION: Notice.

This notice announces, pursuant to Section 10(a)(2) of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA) (Pub. L. 72-363; 5 U.S.C. app. 2), a meeting of the Advisory Council on Transportation Statistics (ACTS). The meeting will be held on Friday, October 8, 2010, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. EST in the Oklahoma City Room at the U.S. Department of Transportation, 1200 New Jersey Ave., SE., Washington, DC.

Section 5601(o) of the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) directs the U.S. Department of Transportation to establish an Advisory Council on Transportation Statistics subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act (5 U.S.C., App. 2) to advise the Bureau of Transportation Statistics (BTS) on the quality, reliability, consistency, objectivity, and relevance of transportation statistics and analyses collected, supported, or disseminated by the Bureau and the Department.

The following is a summary of the draft meeting agenda: (1) USDOT welcome and introduction of Council Members; (2) Overview of prior meeting; (3) Discussion of DOT Strategic Plan and related BTS products; (4) Council Members review and discussion of statistical programs; and (5) future Council activities. Participation is open to the public. Members of the public who wish to participate must notify Tonya Tinsley-Grisham at tonya.tinsley@dot.gov, not later than September 27, 2010. Members of the public may present oral statements at the meeting with the approval of Steven K. Smith, Deputy Director of the Bureau of Transportation Statistics. Non-committee members wishing to present oral statements or obtain information should contact Ms. Tinsley-Grisham via e-mail no later than October 4, 2010.

Questions about the agenda or written comments may be e-mailed or submitted by U.S. Mail to: U.S. Department of Transportation, Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, Attention: Tonya Tinsley-Grisham, 1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE., Room # E34-403, Washington, DC 20590, tonya.tinsley@dot.gov or faxed to (202) 366-3640. BTS requests that written comments be received by October 5, 2010.

Notice of this meeting is provided in accordance with the FACA and the General Services Administration regulations (41 CFR part 102-3) covering management of Federal advisory committees.

Issued in Washington, DC, on the 1st day of September 2010.

Steven K. Smith,

*Deputy Director, Bureau of Transportation
Statistics.*

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DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Aviation Administration

Noise Exposure Map Notice; Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport, Brownsville, TX

AGENCY: Federal Aviation
Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) announces its determination that the noise exposure maps submitted by the City of Brownsville, Texas for Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport under the provisions of 49 U.S.C. 47501 *et seq.* (Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act) and 14 CFR part 150 are in compliance with applicable requirements.

DATES: *Effective Date:* The effective date of the FAA's determination on the noise exposure maps is August 30, 2010.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Lance E. Key, Federal Aviation Administration, 2601 Meacham Boulevard, Fort Worth, Texas 76137, (817) 222-5681.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: This notice announces that the FAA finds that the noise exposure maps submitted for Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport are in compliance with applicable requirements of part 150, effective August 30, 2010. Under 49 U.S.C. section 47503 of the Aviation Safety and Noise Abatement Act

(hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), an airport operator may submit to the FAA noise exposure maps which meet applicable regulations and which depict non-compatible land uses as of the date of submission of such maps, a description of projected aircraft operations, and the ways in which such operations will affect such maps. The Act requires such maps to be developed in consultation with interested and affected parties in the local community, government agencies, and persons using the airport. An airport operator who has submitted noise exposure maps that are found by FAA to be in compliance with the requirements of Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) part 150, promulgated pursuant to the Act, may submit a noise compatibility program for FAA approval which sets forth the measures the operator has taken or proposes to take to reduce existing non-compatible uses and prevent the introduction of additional non-compatible uses.

The FAA has completed its review of the noise exposure maps and accompanying documentation submitted by the City of Brownsville, Texas. The documentation that constitutes the "noise exposure maps" as defined in section 150.7 of part 150 includes: Tables 5.1 through 5.13 and Figures 5.1 through 5.5 for year 2009 existing conditions and Tables 6.1 through 6.10 and Figures 6.1 through 6.5 for year 2015 future conditions at Brownsville South Padre Island International Airport. The FAA has determined that these noise exposure maps and accompanying documentation are in compliance with applicable requirements. This determination is effective on August 30, 2010.

FAA's determination on an airport operator's noise exposure maps is limited to a finding that the maps were developed in accordance with the procedures contained in appendix A of FAR part 150. Such determination does not constitute approval of the applicant's data, information or plans, or a commitment to approve a noise compatibility program or to fund the implementation of that program. If questions arise concerning the precise relationship of specific properties to noise exposure contours depicted on a noise exposure map submitted under section 47503 of the Act, it should be noted that the FAA is not involved in any way in determining the relative locations of specific properties with regard to the depicted noise contours, or in interpreting the noise exposure maps to resolve questions concerning, for example, which properties should be covered by the provisions of section