

10/15/98 LAS VEGAS

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1 ORIGINAL

2
3 HOOVER DAM BYPASS PROJECT

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5 PUBLIC HEARING FOR DRAFT
6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

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10
11 PUBLIC COMMENTS

12
13 THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 1998

14 5:00 P.M.

15
16 Clark County Government Center
17 500 South Grand Central Parkway
18 Las Vegas, Nevada

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23
24
25 Reported by: SHAWN E. OTT, CCR No. 577

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12 ATTACHMENT

13 Miscellaneous documents re Hoover Dam
14 Bypass through Laughlin

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1 LAS VEGAS, CLARK COUNTY, NEV, THURS., OCT. 15, 1998

2 5:00 P.M.

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4 **D32**

5 BILL HORDAN: Bill Hordan. I'm a resident
6 of Las Vegas. I use the highway to Arizona, and
7 something needs to be done whether it's any one of
8 the alternatives. We need to do something
9 immediately to improve the flow of traffic across the
10 Colorado River. Looking at the displays, I think the
D32-1 11 Sugarloaf Mountain route has a lot of advantages.
12 You would have two man-made wonders close together.
13 The people visiting the dam would have an opportunity
14 to see a spectacular bridge crossing the canyon, and
15 it looks to me like it has the best location in
16 relationship to the dam and the view of the dam.
17 Let's hurry up and get something constructed.

18 **D33**

19 GEORGI CODY: Good Evening. For the
20 record, my name is Georgi Cody and I am here tonight
21 on behalf of the Nevada Motor Transport Association,
D33-1 22 a statewide membership organization representing the
23 motor carrier industry in Nevada. I would like to
24 begin by commending the Project Management Team for
25 their excellent Draft Environmental Impact Study.

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D32 Hordan, Bill

Response to Comment D32-1

FHWA, the lead agency, has identified the Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative, with the proposed mitigation measures, as the preferred alternative. Section 2.6.2.1 of the FEIS discusses the rationale for its selection.

Hoover Dam may be visible from high-profile vehicles traveling over the Sugarloaf Mountain bridge; however, the high elevation of the bridge, relative to the dam, and the safety rail will minimize viewing opportunities. The EIS (Section 3.8.2.2) states that there will be no stopping for views of the dam on the new bridge. Parking, pedestrians, and bicycles on the bridge would create a safety hazard. However, in anticipation of great public desire for views of Hoover Dam from the new bridge on the Sugarloaf Mountain alignment, FHWA will study the technical feasibility of a separate viewing facility associated with the bridge (see response to Comment A12-2).

D33 Cody, Georgi

Response to Comment D33-1

FHWA, the lead agency, has identified the Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative, with the proposed mitigation measures, as the preferred alternative on the basis of minimizing environmental impacts, engineering and operational advantages, and lower construction cost. Section 2.6.2.1 of the FEIS discusses the rationale for this decision. The preferred alternative resolves the negative impacts associated with the No Build Alternative and the LBA.

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1 The DEIS provides a clear and concise picture of the
2 problems associated with the current route over the
3 Hoover Dam. Problems, I might add, the trucking
4 industry has long been aware of.

5 US93 is a major commercial route between
6 Arizona, Nevada and Utah. It is also a significant
7 segment of a major NAFTA route between Mexico and
8 Canada. The trucking industry faces this narrow,
9 winding, steep, congested section of US93 daily and
10 knows first-hand its dangers and potential for
11 disaster.

12 We have carefully reviewed the information
13 provided in the DEIS and agree with the Team's
14 conclusion that each of the three recommended build
15 alternatives -- Promontory Point, Sugarloaf Mountain
16 and Gold Strike Canyon are viable options. The No
17 Build Alternative is, in our estimation, not an
18 alternative at all. Ignoring a problem of the
19 magnitude of that which currently exists would be
20 beyond merely foolhardy or unwise -- it would be
21 courting disaster.

22 The problems associated with the current
23 Hoover Dam crossing will not go away; they will only
24 increase over time. We were glad to read in the DEIS
25 that the Laughlin-Bullhead City option has been

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1 studied and rejected as a build alternative.

2 The trucking industry opposes this route
3 because of the high cost associated with diverting
4 truck traffic 23 miles and concerns over road
5 safety. The DEIS rightly concludes this route does
6 not address the critical needs of the Hoover Dam
7 Bypass Project. Simply put -- it would provide a
8 poor alternative, not a solution.

9 Based on the information contained in the
10 DEIS, the Nevada Motor Transport Association has
11 concluded the Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative to be
12 the most attractive of the three build alternatives.
13 This decision is based on road geometrics, cost,
14 noise impacts, and other factors. We are however
15 cognizant of the potential problems each of the
16 alternatives presents to wildlife and cultural
17 resources in the area. We await further details on
18 the full impact of whichever of the build
19 alternatives is selected. We hope any adverse
20 impacts may be avoided or minimized.

21 US93, as currently located, can no longer
22 adequately handle the 12,000 vehicles, including
23 automobiles, recreational vehicles and commercial
24 vehicles which cross the Hoover Dam each day. The
25 dam reached its traffic capacity seven years ago.

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1 The route is congested, dangerous and vulnerable to
2 damage. It is time to move ahead to find solutions
3 and to work together to meet the challenges of
4 providing a safe alternative to the US93 Hoover Dam
5 crossing.

6 As a final note, along with a copy of my
7 comments here today, I would like to provide you a
8 copy of the Hoover Dam Bypass Resolution adopted by
9 the Nevada Motor Transport Association on October
10 5th, 1998. This resolution has been sent to each
11 member of the Nevada Congressional Delegation and to
12 Governor Bob Miller. The resolution supports the
13 advancement of the Hoover Dam Bypass as a Federal
14 High Priority Project with future costs coming from
15 the National Corridor Planning and Development
16 Programs and the Federal Lands Highway Program.

17 I'd like to thank you for this opportunity
18 to provide our comments to you here tonight.

19 **D34**

20 DOUG POLLOCK: My name is Doug Pollock.

21 A, all the departments involved in building the
22 bridge should get together, the Department of
D34-1 23 Reclamation, the Bureau of Parks and Recreation, the
24 DOT, Department of Transportation. Money was
25 utilized for something that was not necessary at

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**D34 Pollock, Doug
Response to Comment D34-1**

The Nelson Alternative, utilizing the Nevada 165 corridor and U.S. 95, was evaluated and eliminated from further consideration primarily because it would require construction of about 12 miles of new roadway causing greater environmental impacts and at higher cost. For example, it would impact approximately 491 acres of Section 4(f) land in the LMNRA (see EIS Section 2.5 and Table 2-1).

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1 Hoover Dam, the parking lots, that could have gone to
2 building a bridge. The Department of Parks and
3 Recreations have created a restricted area in the
4 area that they want a bridge or the government has.

5 At this point what would be feasible for a
6 bridge, because it can break at the points that they
7 want if that dam should break, they should put a
8 longer span like Nelson which at one time was a
9 washed out marina. There was a marina in 1974 that
10 was washed out. The government can reconstruct that
11 wash, rebuild the marina, put a bridge over there,
12 and everybody will derive revenue from it. The
13 State, the citizens of Clark County, the State of
14 Nevada will derive use from the marina and the bridge
15 and tourism will derive use of the marina and the
16 bridge and also will increase tourism to Clark County
17 and the State of Nevada.

18 Also in '83 there was an -- sometime in
19 the early '80s, there was an overflow at Hoover Dam.
20 The overflow took it, but when they were built in the
21 '30s, they were very thick stainless steel. They are
22 now paper thin. Also the dam has cracking, cannot
23 take the abuse of the heavy traffic over it. Since
24 the contract has expired or whatever it was with
25 Southern Cal Edison, the government has not kept the

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1 dam up to the condition of what it should be. That's
2 my input.

3 And all of these people should get
4 together and find a way that's feasible that the
5 users can have and also that the states will derive
6 and the government will derive for care. There
7 already is a road existing to Nelson, been there for
8 years. So all they have to do is cut. Up to two
9 townships north of the road of Nelson are not a
10 restricted area. Anything further than that north is
11 a restricted area.

12 Now, they're going to create a conflict
13 and say we want to go through a restricted area that
14 was designated restricted ten years ago. That's
15 hypocritical. This is a lot of baloney. This could
16 have been solved 20 years ago.

17 **D35**

18 ANONYMOUS: Not even given Bullhead City a
19 chance at the new truck route that could come down
20 the Arizona side and go over the Davis Dam on a
21 brand-new four-lane 163 that dumps off on Highway 95
D35-1 22 and heads north to the Railroad Pass through
23 Searchlight, and Garth Frainer, who has built 90
24 percent of the highways in the State of Nevada, will
25 give you a contract for \$1 million a mile for

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D35 Anonymous

Response to Comment D35-1

For detailed discussion of the rationale for eliminating the LBA (Route 95/163/68), please see EIS Section 2.5 and responses to Comments B1-5, B1-7, C7-2, C7-3, C7-4, and C7-9.

Moving the crossing downstream essentially increases the risk of impacting water for millions of people located in southern Arizona and California. If a spill were to occur at the Laughlin crossing, the potential for impacting the water for several aqueducts located downstream becomes greater (see response to Comment D31-1).

The USFWS has stated that the LBA would affect critical habitat for the desert tortoise, and increased traffic in the area would result in substantial direct and indirect impacts to the tortoise. Furthermore, the LBA might have economic benefits for communities along this route; however, this is not part of the purpose and need for the Hoover Dam bypass (see response to Comments B1-2 and B1-5).

See response to Comment B1-4, which discusses the rationale for concluding that the Boulder City/U.S. 93 Corridor Study is a separate project with independent utility.

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1 blacktop paving. And it's 60 miles, so you are
2 talking \$60 million.

3 And if they wanted to use the old Davis
4 Dam route, they could build a new bridge in between
5 Davis Dam and the new Laughlin bridge for the trucks
6 and also put locks there that would rise, and if a
7 chemical truck spilled into the Colorado River, they
8 could close the locks at Davis Dam, shut the water
9 off, raise the locks, lower the new bridge and get
10 the pumps and trucks in there and pump it all out and
11 nothing would go down the Colorado River and
12 contaminate real drastic such as mercury or
13 radioactive material, which if this stuff spills in
14 the new bridge that they're talking about or from
15 Boulder Dam, it's going into the river, and who knows
16 what will happen from that point.

17 And as far as the environmentalists are
18 concerned, there is no sheep in the area of the
19 Bullhead Road and there's no tortoises. Tortoises
20 don't get within 1500 feet of the highway. There is
21 proven statistics here, and, yes, it is 23 miles
22 farther, but Laughlin needs a shot in the arm, and
23 this traffic would definitely do it, and the state
24 would receive many taxes from the casinos' profit and
25 also the sale of diesel fuel for the truckers that

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1 they would purchase there if it was available, which
2 would consequently pay for this \$60 million highway
3 expansion in a short time.

4 And the people in Boulder City are
5 definitely against the trucks coming into their town,
6 and now with this new bridge that you propose, you
7 are directing it right into the back of Gold Strike
8 Inn which is a casino, and if nobody knows it by now,
9 Mr. Ensign, our congressman, has a piece of the Gold
10 Strike Inn along with Mr. Bellomy and also owns the
11 Railroad Pass. Well, how sweet it is to have all the
12 trucks coming into the back door of your casino.

13 **D36**

14 PAT QUINN: My name is Pat Quinn. And
15 first on the record I would like to say it's a shame
16 they didn't use the Willow Beach bypass that was
17 engineered 25 years ago, but of the three options
18 currently available, there is no doubt that Gold
19 Strike Canyon route is the only one to really take.
20 It would be less cumbersome to traffic during
D36-1 21 construction, and it is already bad enough coming
22 across the dam the way it is, and I just think it
23 seems like the most direct route and will give the
24 people new vistas to see as they travel down through
25 into Arizona. I guess that's about it.

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D36 Quinn, Pat

Response to Comment D36-1

The construction of a bridge on the Willow Beach alignment is not an acceptable alternative. As explained in the EIS Executive Summary, this route was eliminated from further consideration because it requires about 19 additional miles of new highway construction, resulting in substantially greater environmental impacts – most notably impacts to Section 4(f) lands (public park and recreational areas) – and higher costs. See response to Comments C4-1, C4-2, C4-3, and C4-4.

See Sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 in the FEIS and response to Comments C3-1, C11-6, and E4-1 for discussion about the Gold Strike Canyon Alternative and the reasons that the Sugarloaf Mountain alignment was identified as the preferred alternative. The Gold Strike Canyon Alternative has the most severe impact on desert bighorn sheep, has the highest cost of the three near-dam alternatives, and would adversely impact a popular hiking trail through Gold Strike Canyon to the hot springs.

Similar to Gold Strike Canyon, construction of the Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative will all be done on new alignment, except at the tie-in points with existing U.S. 93 in Nevada and Arizona. Hence, disruption of U.S. 93 traffic and dam activities will be minimized.

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1 **D37**

2 NICHOLAS M. HUGHES. My name is Nicholas
3 M. Hughes. That Gold Strike, to me, that's the only
4 way to go. Just like he said, in the first place you
5 are not going to disturb the rest of the roads up
6 there on construction when they're constructing it,
7 see, and that isn't the concern that I'm thinking
8 about. I'm thinking about a lot shorter distance,
9 and you are not -- on each end of the 93 going clear
10 over to those other two roads going over to Gold
11 Strike Hotel, you have got a big long stretch there
12 where those two roads are running together right
D37-1 13 there, and that's a terrible delay. I was across
14 that road, oh, about two months ago, and right after
15 I left Gold Strike Inn, I got bumper to bumper with
16 traffic, and I was just oozing along, oozing along, a
17 foot at a time until I got down -- you know where
18 that road turns off to go to that lake, you know,
19 Observation Point, you know what I'm talking about,
20 it turns to the left and goes off? When I got to
21 that point, I turned around there immediately and
22 came back through Boulder City and went to Railroad
23 Pass and on down to Searchlight and Laughlin and then
24 I went into Kingman from that way.

25 I have occasion to go to Kingman a lot. I

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D37 Hughes, Nicholas M.

Response to Comment D37-1

See Sections 2.6.2 and 2.6.3 in the FEIS and response to Comments C3-1, C11-6, and E4-1 for discussion about the Gold Strike Canyon Alternative and the reasons that the Sugarloaf Mountain alignment was identified as the preferred alternative. The Gold Strike Canyon Alternative shortens the distance between the U.S. 93/95 interchange in Nevada and Kingman, Arizona, by less than 1 mile when compared to the Promontory Point and Sugarloaf Mountain Alternatives (see EIS Table 2-1). Hence, the difference in distance is negligible.

Similar to Gold Strike Canyon, construction of the Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative will all be done on new alignment, except at the tie-in points with existing U.S. 93 in Nevada and Arizona. Hence, disruption of U.S. 93 traffic and dam activities will be minimized.

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1 have got property over in Mohave County, and I've got
2 property at Searchlight. You know, it's terrible to
3 get slowed down with that tourist traffic, you know,
4 where you have got all sightseers. I think either
5 one of those, especially that thing that has a bridge
6 across the lake, I think that's the most ridiculous
7 one, and you are going to be congested with traffic
8 going up to where it leaves the present highway, and
9 you're going -- when you get back on the Nevada side,
10 you are going to get back with that congestion on the
11 Nevada side from that warehouse on to Gold Strike.

12 And I think the only way to go is to take
13 that Gold Strike route. It is going to cost a little
14 bit more for tunnels and whatnot, but it saves time,
15 it's going to be shorter and it solves the problem.
16 You don't get into that congestion up there on either
17 side of the dam. That's about all I have got to
18 say.

19 I am just very much against those other
20 two routes, very much against those other two
21 routes. I know one of the national parkman I was
22 talking to there, they seem to favor that one just
23 below the dam, but that doesn't solve the problem
24 like that Gold Strike route, see. I am emphatically
25 against those other two routes, and I'm going to

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1 write -- beside what you are taking, I'm going to
2 write my opinions down and mail it in.

3 **D38**

4 DENNIS LACHASE: My name is Dennis
5 Lachase. I live at 605 Spyglass Lane, Las Vegas,
6 Nevada. One, this thing should have been in 15 years
7 ago. I asked the environmental people what's
8 happening to the environment when they have several
9 thousands of cars backed up hours and hours every day
10 in both directions. To put it in, it would whisk
11 people through the area in 10, 15 minutes instead of
12 keeping them there three, four hours. I think this
13 is long, long overdue.

D38-1

14 I did write something down on this comment
15 sheet here. This project is 20 years too late,
16 should have been done in the '70s when they first
17 proposed it. Due to three, four-hour delays on going
18 across the dam the environment suffers more than what
19 they're doing. And the more they procrastinate and
20 delay, the longer it's going to -- the worse it's
21 going to get.

22 We are getting more and more tourists into
23 town every year, so the jam is getting worse and
24 worse. They have stopped me from going fishing down
25 at Willow Beach. Used to go down there after work.

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D38 Lachase, Dennis

Response to Comment D38-1

FHWA, the lead agency, has identified the Sugarloaf Mountain Alternative, with the proposed mitigation measures, as the preferred alternative on the basis of minimizing environmental impacts, engineering and operational advantages, and lower construction cost. Section 2.6.2.1 of the FEIS discusses the rationale for this decision.

See response to Comment B1-4.

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1 Now you have to take an all-day trip. End of
2 statement.

3 The No. 2 is supposed to be the least
4 environmentally impact, and it can be used or
5 installed the quickest, which I think would alleviate
6 this major problem that they have. Just going to
7 move the bottleneck up to Boulder City. I think that
8 will help. Let's get it in and get it going.

9 Let's get the road accesses to and from it
10 so that we can move people through here, because
11 they're mostly tourists. They're not locals, and
12 when the locals get involved in this, we have places
13 to go and people to see and things to do, and we
14 can't do that. It's easier now to drive down to
15 Laughlin and go across the bridge up through Kingman
16 and then get on the freeway, go that way, than it is
17 to sit there now and go across the dam. It's 28
18 miles farther also.

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

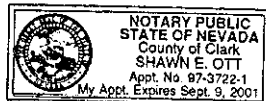
2
3 STATE OF NEVADA)
4) ss
5 COUNTY OF CLARK)

6 I, Shawn E. Ott, Certified Shorthand
7 Reporter, do hereby certify that I took down in
8 Stenotype all of the proceedings had in the
9 before-entitled matter at the time and place
10 indicated and that thereafter said shorthand notes
11 were transcribed into typewriting at and under my
12 direction and supervision and that the foregoing
13 transcript constitutes a full, true and accurate
14 record of the proceedings had.

15 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my
16 hand and affixed my official seal in my office in the
17 County of Clark, State of Nevada, this 30th day of
18 October, 1998

19
20
21 *Shawn E Ott*

22
23 Shawn E. Ott
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