



United States Department of the Interior



Fish and Wildlife Service Arizona Ecological Services Field Office

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FD-34836

In Reply Refer to:
AESO/SE
22410-2008-F-0190
02-21-99-F-007

October 10, 2008


Ms. Victoria Rutson, Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis
Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration
Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Ms. Rutson:

We are requesting an additional 60 days to complete consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, on the proposed construction and operation of the Arizona Eastern Railway (AZER) Safford Branch project and Gila River bridge crossing in Graham County, Arizona, due to work-load considerations. If you concur, and given that you have agreed to forego the review of a draft biological opinion, we will provide you with our final biological opinion no later than November 30, 2008.

If you have any questions or concerns about this consultation or the consultation process in general, please contact Jason Douglas (520) 670-6150 (x226) or Sherry Barrett (520) 670-6150 (x223).

Sincerely,


FOR Steven L. Spangle
Field Supervisor

cc: Assistant Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Tucson, Arizona
Kimberly Otero, WestLand Resources, Inc., Tucson, Arizona
Mark Cochran, CH2M Hill, Tucson, Arizona