

Regarding STB Finance Docket No. 34836

March 31, 2008

#E1-7226
DAW
FD 34836

Diana Wood
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 East Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Dear Ms. Wood:

There are some concerning aspects of the proposal to run a rail line to the copper mining operations north of Safford. The rail link is obviously needed, and would have many benefits in getting truck traffic off the area highways; but the present proposals on the bridge construction and the U. S. Highway 70 crossing are the two points which need additional scrutiny and revision.

In the area where the rail would cross US 70, there is a significant amount of traffic, and this volume is increasing to the point where ADOT is planning a five lane segment through that area. A grade crossing on a highway with this traffic load would create a considerable bottleneck and possible hazard due to restrictions on HAZMAT trucks and buses. From many years experience as a trucker, I am very aware of all the consequences of a string of traffic flowing at around 65 miles per hour, then a heavy truck or bus having to come to a complete stop at the crossing, and then gear back up to regain traffic speed. The resulting backups are inconvenient and irritating to drivers, and there is always the risk of an inattentive driver rear-ending in the slowdown, or some impatient driver performing an unsafe pass. These crossings congest traffic all day, every day, not just the few minutes a train is in the crossing. In this location of high current use and certain additional traffic load in the future, I think the rail should definitely be required to overpass the highway.

The design of the river crossing has some elements which it seems have not been adequately addressed; these being that no bridges in the area have been able to contain the large flood flows, and that this river carries tremendous amounts of debris at flood stage. These details require that an adequate design have a maximum allowance for the passage of debris as well as ample spill areas around the approaches so as not to create a dam and back up floodwater over large amounts of surrounding land.

Thank You:

Robert Rogers
Robert Rogers
P.O. Box 69
Fort Thomas
Arizona 85536