

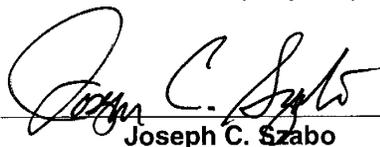
DESERTXPRESS HIGH-SPEED PASSENGER TRAIN
FINAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
AND 4(F) EVALUATION

Prepared by
USDOT Federal Railroad Administration

With Cooperating Agencies
Bureau of Land Management
Surface Transportation Board
Federal Highway Administration
National Park Service

Pursuant to:

National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. § 4332 et seq), and implementing regulations (40 C.F.R. Parts 1500-1508), 64 FR 28545, 23 CFR §771, 65 FR 33960, 49 C.F.R. § 1105; 49 U.S.C. § 303 (formerly Department of Transportation Act of 1966, Section 4(f)); National Historic Preservation Act (16 U.S.C. § 470); Clean Air Act as amended (42 USC §§ 7401 et seq. and 40 CFR Parts 51 and 93); the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (16 USC § 1531-1544); the Clean Water Act (33 USC § 1251-1387); and the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended (42 USC § 4601)



Joseph C. Szabo
Administrator

Federal Railroad Administration
U.S. Department of Transportation

Date 3/8/11

Contact the following individual for additional information concerning this document:

Ms. Wendy Messenger
USDOT Federal Railroad Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E.
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Abstract: DesertXpress Enterprises Inc., the DesertXpress High-Speed Passenger Train Project (DesertXpress project) Applicant, proposes the construction and operation of a fully grade-separated, dedicated double track passenger-only railroad along an approximately 200-mile corridor, from Victorville, CA to Las Vegas, NV. The purpose of the DesertXpress project is to provide reliable and safe passenger rail transportation between southern California and Las Vegas using proven high-speed rail technology that results in a convenient alternative to automobile or air travel that also adds transportation capacity to the I-15 freeway corridor. The need for the DesertXpress project stems from several factors, including but not limited to high and increasing travel demand on I-15 – the only major roadway linking southern California to Las Vegas, with limited opportunities to increase capacity. Other factors include constraints on the expansion of air travel from southern California and an above-average automobile accident rate on the I-15 freeway.

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) is the Lead Agency for the environmental review of the project. The Cooperating Agencies are the Bureau of Land Management, the Surface Transportation Board, the Federal Highway Administration, and the National Park Service.

In March 2009, FRA, in coordination with the Cooperating Agencies, published a Draft EIS and circulated the document for a 56-day public and agency review and comment period. Following publication of the Draft EIS, the project applicant proposed several modifications and additions based upon substantive comments received during public and agency review to reduce or avoid significant environmental effects. These proposed project modifications and additions were analyzed in Supplemental Draft EIS, published by FRA and the Cooperating Agencies in September 2010 and circulated for a 46-day public and agency review and comment period.

In accordance with regulations implementing NEPA, the Final EIS evaluates the environmental effects associated with the Preferred Alternative selected by FRA and the Cooperating Agencies and the No Action Alternative. The Preferred Alternative rail alignment would be almost entirely located within the existing I-15 corridor, with tracks running alongside freeway travel lanes. The Preferred Alternative also specifies station and maintenance facility sites and identifies Electrical Multiple Unit (EMU) as the locomotive technology. The Final EIS also compares the environmental effects of the Preferred Alternative to the other Action Alternatives. The Final EIS also includes amendments to the Draft EIS and Supplemental Draft EIS to both reflect updated information since publication of the previous documents and to address certain comments received during the respective public and agency comment periods (40 CFR 1502.9(b)).

The Preferred Alternative would have adverse environmental effects related to sensitive biological resources, cultural resources, hydrological resources, utility infrastructure, localized traffic effects near the Victorville and Las Vegas stations, land use and community impacts relative to business displacements, increased noise levels, air quality pollutant emissions during construction, and existing grazing land allotments. Mitigation measures and strategies are described to avoid or minimize these adverse effects. Conversely, the Preferred Alternative demonstrates several beneficial effects to the environment, including diverting automobile traffic from the I-15 freeway, providing economic growth during construction, and improving air quality and energy consumption during operation.

This Final EIS is being made available to the public in accordance with NEPA. Pursuant to 40 CFR 1506.10, this Final EIS will be circulated for a 30-day waiting period commencing on the publication date of EPA's notice of availability in the Federal Register, which is expected to be Friday, April 1, 2011. Following this waiting period, the Lead and Cooperating Agencies will each issue a Record of Decision on the proposed project. A Record of Decision is a concise public document that formally states the decision of the federal agency on the project and explains factors considered in reaching the decision.

The Final EIS is available at public libraries identified below as well as on the internet at the following address: <http://www.fra.dot.gov/rpd/freight/1703.shtml>.

<u>Victorville City Library</u>	<u>Barstow Library</u>	<u>Las Vegas Library</u>	<u>Clark County Library</u>
15011 Circle Drive	304 East Buena Vista	833 Las Vegas Blvd. N.	1401 Flamingo Road
Victorville, CA 92395	Barstow, CA 92311	Las Vegas, NV 89101	Las Vegas, NV 89119

Written concerns on this Final EIS should be sent by mail and received by **Monday, May 2, 2011**, addressed to the Federal Railroad Administration as follows:

Attn: DesertXpress
Ms. Wendy Messenger
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1200 New Jersey Avenue S.E., MS-20
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