



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

July 17, 2007

Honorable William R. Rhodes
Gila River Indian Community
525 West Gu u Ki
P.O. Box 97
Sacaton, AZ 85247

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34836, Arizona Eastern Railway – Construction and Operation Exemption – In Graham County, Arizona; Response to Request to be a Consulting Party under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

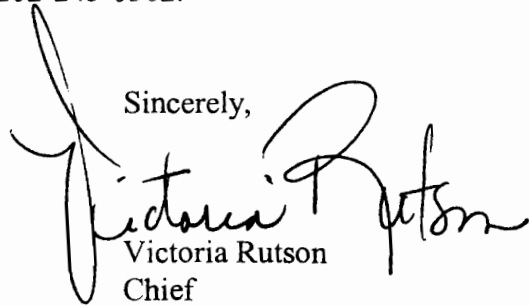
Dear Governor Rhodes:

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is in receipt of your June 11, 2007 written request, provided on behalf of the Gila River Indian Community, to be designated a consulting party for the above referenced project pursuant to Section 36 CFR 800.2(c)(5) of the regulations implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA). As you know, SEA is conducting an environmental review, as required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and NHPA, of the Arizona Eastern Railway's proposed rail line construction and operation in Graham County, Arizona. Section 106 of NHPA requires that the Board consult with Federal, tribal, state, and local agencies, and consulting parties to identify, assess, and resolve adverse effects to significant historic properties that may be caused by the proposed undertaking.

We believe your involvement as a Section 106 consulting party is appropriate given your aboriginal connections to Arizona and your expertise regarding the possible location of any properties of tribal traditional religious significance within the project area. We are therefore pleased to include your organization as a Section 106 consulting party for this proceeding and will ensure that you receive all relevant information to assist you in your participation.

We appreciate your interest in this project and look forward to working with you as we complete the Section 106 and NEPA processes. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Diana Wood, SEA Project Manager, at 202-245-0302.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and a stylized "R".

Victoria Rutson

Chief

Section of Environmental Analysis

cc: James Garrison, Arizona State Parks