



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

CALIFORNIA DIVISION

650 Capitol Mall, Suite 4-100

Sacramento, CA. 95814

April 28, 2004

IN REPLY REFER TO
HDA-CA
File # 08-RIV-79
Document # P49028

Ms. Nova Blazej
US Environmental Protection Agency
75 Hawthorne Street, CMD-2
San Francisco, CA 94105

Attention: Liz Varnhagen

Dear Ms. Blazej:

Subject: Preliminary Agreement - SR-79 Criteria and Alternatives Selection

The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is requesting your Preliminary Agreement for the Criteria and Alternatives Selection, as defined in the Memorandum of Understanding (National Environmental Policy Act and Clean Water Act Section 404 Integration Process for Surface Transportation Projects in Arizona, California and Nevada) (MOU) between the FHWA, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), for the State Route 79 Project from Domenigoni Parkway to Gilman Springs Road (Project) based on the Draft Final Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection document dated April 14, 2004.

The selected alternatives and Alignment Review Areas presented in the Draft Final Project Criteria and Alternatives Selection document will be carried forward for further evaluation in the Project technical studies. Information gathered from the analysis in the Project technical studies will be used to refine the alignment alternatives. At the conclusion of the technical studies, Chapters 1 and 2 (Purpose and Need and Project Alternatives, respectively) of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS)/Environmental Impact Report (EIR) will be circulated to the USACE, USEPA and USFWS for Final Agreement on Purpose and Need, Criteria and Alternatives Selection. Final Agreement is required prior to the development and subsequent circulation of the draft EIS/EIR to the public.

We are requesting your agency's written response within 45 days, per the MOU. If you have any questions, please contact Mahfoud Licha at (916) 498-5866 or e-mail at mahfoud.lich@fhwa.dot.gov.

Sincerely,

/s/ **Mahfoud A. Licha**

For
Gene K. Fong
Division Administrator

cc: w/o Enclosure (by mail)
Mary Butterwick, USEPA
Marie Petry, Caltrans D-8

cc: w/o Enclosure (by E-mail)
Hideo Sugita, RCTC
Maiser Khaled, FHWA
Larry Vinzant, FHWA
Mahfoud Licha, FHWA

MLicha/at