

[4910-22]

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Federal Highway Administration

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT: IMPERIAL COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed highway project in Imperial County, California.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: C. Glenn Clinton, District Engineer,  
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SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the California Department of Transportation will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to construct approximately 19.9 km (12.4 miles) of State Routes 78 and 111 in Imperial County and near the City of Brawley from 0.8 km (0.5 miles) south of Baughman Road on State Routes 86 and 78 to 0.5 km (0.3 miles) north of Mead Road on State Route 111. The project is proposed as a four-lane expressway on new location.

Improvements to the corridor are considered necessary to provide the final link in continuous four-lane highway access between Interstate 8 in Imperial County and

Interstate 10 in Riverside County. This project is part of the primary North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) corridor between the mainland of Mexico and the City of Los Angeles. These improvements are also considered necessary to relieve local congestion and highway safety concerns in the City of Brawley along existing State Routes 78 and 111 which are currently burdened with extensive commercial traffic. Alternatives under consideration include (1) taking no action; (2) constructing a divided four-lane, controlled access expressway on new location; (3) alignment variations as appropriate to minimize environmental effects of the project.

Within the limits of the study area for this project, various environmental resources and issues are known to exist and include but are not limited to: wetlands, floodway and floodplain, wildlife habitat, prime farmlands, growth inducement, economic, home and business relocation, noise, changes to vehicle traffic patterns, regional air quality, seismic exposure, land use planning, hazardous waste, and irrigation/drain systems.

Letters describing the proposed action and soliciting comments will be sent to appropriate Federal, State, and local agencies, and to private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed or are known to have interest in this proposal. At least one public meeting will be held in Imperial County to solicit input from the local citizens on alternatives. In addition, a public hearing will be held. Public Notice will be given of the time and place of the meetings and hearing. The draft EIS will be available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearing.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all

interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and the EIS should be directed to the FHWA at the address provided above. The views of agencies having knowledge about historic resources potentially affected by the proposal or interested in the effects of the project on historic properties are solicited.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: October 18, 1996

*/s/ C. Glenn Clinton*

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C. GLENN CLINTON  
Chief, District Operations - South  
Sacramento, California