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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

December 11, 2009

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SUBCOMMITTEE ON
TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION

Mr. Dennis Smith
Executive Director
Maricopa Association of Governments
302 N 1st Ave, Suite 300
Phoenix, AZ 85003-1562

Dear Mr. Smith,

I want to thank you for facilitating Monday's meeting of key stakeholders to discuss the possibility of studying an alternative route for the Loop 202 Freeway through the Gila River Indian Community. I was elated by the fact that Lt. Gov. Joseph Manuel and Community Manager David White of the Gila River Indian Community attended this meeting and were open to the idea of receiving a proposal for an alternative route from ADOT and MAG.

As you know, I oppose the current proposed alignment along Pecos Road.

I realize that this intriguing new development is contingent upon further consideration and a written request by the Tribal Government, which Lt. Gov. Manuel indicated could be forthcoming soon. While I understand that the ongoing Environmental Impact Study on the current proposed Pecos Road route will continue in the mean time, I view this meeting – which included not only representatives from MAG, ADOT and the GRIC, but also representatives from the Federal Highway Administration, Bureau of Indian Affairs, City of Phoenix, Bureau of Indian Affairs, my office, the Office of Congressman Ed Pastor and Councilman Sal DiCiccio -- as an important opportunity worthy of exploration.

I was also especially interested to learn of the potentially substantial cost savings to taxpayers that could be achieved by pursuing an alternative route through the Gila River Indian Community. Given the current economic climate and the state's ongoing revenue issues, I look forward to seeing a proposal that outlines in more detail how these savings might be realized.

Again, thank you for your work and leadership on this matter, and please extend my gratitude to all who took part in the discussion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Harry E. Mitchell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "H" and "M".

Harry E. Mitchell
Member of Congress