



PIMA COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

DISTRICT 3

130 WEST CONGRESS STREET, 11 FLOOR
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85701-1317
(520) 740-8126

ddurazo@exchange.co.pima.az.us

SHARON BRONSON
CHAIR

January 7, 2004

The Honorable Mark Udall
U.S. House of Representatives
115 Canon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RECEIVED

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Mark E. Udall
DC Office

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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

DIANA DURAZO-GRUBB
SPECIAL STAFF ASSISTANT

KATIE MODAFFERI
SPECIAL STAFF ASSISTANT

KIKI BARCELO
SPECIAL STAFF ASSISTANT

Dear Mr. Udall

As Chair of the Pima County Board of Supervisors, I support your bill H.R. 1639 amending RS 2477. This 1866 law is antiquated and in need of revision.

I am concerned about the Department of Interior's recent Conveyances, Disclaimer and Correction Documents Rule, 43 CFR Part 1860. The use of this rule to process highway claims under RS 2477 has the potential to create serious negative consequences to local government efforts in transportation planning, wildlife management, recreation and environmental protection.

Proposed plans by some to claim thousands of miles of road rights across federal and private land could transform thousands of old cow trails and riverbeds into new highways. In short, this proposal could bring harm to public lands, undermine private-property rights and hurt relations with Indian tribes.

H.R. 1639 would set appropriate nationwide standards for how counties can claim highway rights on federal land, prohibit such roads through National Parks, Wildlife Refuges and Wilderness Areas. These roadless lands are critical for wildlife habitat. The bill's four-year deadline is appropriate-- those claiming to have rights based on RS 2477 should be prepared to assert their rights in that reasonable time frame.

Identifying, asserting, maintaining legitimate rights-of-way protect social and economic resources. Also protected are public health and safety, including but not limited to, search and rescue, fire protection, health and law enforcement, and other emergency services. I appreciate and support your efforts to resolve the RS 2477 issue by crafting legislation that takes into account the considerations of all the stakeholders.

Sincerely,

Sharon Bronson