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Thank you for your comments on the I-11 DRAFT TIER 1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND PRELIMINARY SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION (DRAFT TIER 1 EIS) Nogales to Wickenburg.

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I-11 DRAFT TIER 1 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT AND PRELIMINARY SECTION 4(f) EVALUATION (DRAFT TIER 1 EIS) Nogales to Wickenburg

Human intensification of land use is causing a mass extinction worldwide. This is the message of the UN report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services. Wherever, we look, whether overseas or in the USA, ever more species are in decline and are threatened with extinction. Let there be no mistake, the primary cause is us. We are taking away habitat, degrading habitat, fragmenting habitat, and isolating habitat.

And here we are talking about freeway through the Avra Valley. It would be a huge mistake, because of the habitat destruction that it would cause, the land use changes in a beautiful natural valley, and the isolation of habitats that it would cause.

Habitats that become isolated lose species. They lose some species quickly, but others take a long time. This proposed I-11 route through the Avra Valley would cut off the Tucson Mountains. They would be totally surrounded by roads and development. This is where some key natural gems of the Tucson region are. The Tucson Mountains are an extraordinary biologically rich mountain range. They have the order of 700 species of plants. And untold numbers of animals live there too. This biological resource would be seriously harmed by this road. Many species would not be able to move between it and other places. Invasive species would become worse. Buffel grass thrives in disturbed areas. How would we ever deal with this extraordinary threat to this gem of an ecosystem?

How is it that ADOT and FHWA can ignore what they have been hearing in the all the various meetings on I-11? The people here do not want it to go through the Avra Valley. We do not want the Tucson Mountains isolated. We do not want to see the Valley destroyed.

ADOT and FHWA have some strong alternatives to the Avra Valley, including not building this freeway, or building it along the existing I-10 and I-19. There is no need for more destruction of nature. No need to spoil the beautiful Avra valley, no need to harm the National Park and the Tucson Mountain Park. Let these gems of Tucson, these wonderful parks for the citizens, these extraordinary tourist attractions, and their extraordinary biological resources, remain extraordinary.

What is the moral case for continuing to destroy nature? There is none. In fact, there is a strong moral case against it.

Why must ADOT and Fed highway admin contribute to the mass extinction of life on Earth? Why must it put this freeway through the Avra Valley. It does not have to, and if we are not going to have a much impoverished earth, the place to start is by not deliberately choosing to destroy nature, to destroy habitat, when it is so easy to make a different choice as it is here. If I-11 is to be built, it does not have to go through the Avra Valley. Putting it through there is wanton destruction.

What is the response of ADOT and FHWA? Some wildlife crossings and some stretches of highway with no off ramps. These are just tokens. Better than nothing, but much worse than not having this highway. If you want to keep the area for free movement of wildlife, elevate the

whole freeway, and stop development following it by having no off ramps between major cities. But even these measures do not get rid of the disturbance from its construction, do not get rid of noise, light pollution, and air pollution from this highway. And the Valley remains visually scarred. The case is clear, do not build it in the Avra Valley or any other natural area.



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