



August 16, 2024

Mr. Shailen Bhatt  
Administrator  
Federal Highway Administration  
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20590

*Transmitted with the Application*

**RE: ADOT & AZGFD Grant Request from the Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program for the Kachina Village Overpass Project, FY2024-2025**

Arizona Sportsmen for Wildlife Conservation (AZSFWC) appreciates the opportunity to lend support for the grant application of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) to the Federal Highway Administration's (FHWA) Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Wildlife Crossings Pilot Program (WCPP).

AZSFWC is the leading 501c-3 non-profit organization dedicated to wildlife conservation, habitat improvement, youth recruitment and retention, as well as providing educational opportunities for outdoor enthusiasts on issues important to their passions. AZSFWC member, affiliate, and associate groups reach across the spectrum of wildlife conservation, angling, hunting, shooting, outdoor recreation, and businesses from across Arizona. Our member groups represent well over 28,500 people from Arizona.

ADOT is requesting approximately \$25 million in WCPP funding to complete the final design and construction of the proposed Kachina Village Overpass Project along Interstate-17 (I-17) south of the City of Flagstaff. I-17 is one of Arizona's major connecting corridors. The wildlife crossing will be used by elk and many other species that cross the highway. It will also include nearly 13 miles of fencing, cattle guards, and concrete escape ramps.

Along this stretch of I-17, wildlife-vehicle collisions (WVCs) account for the highest percentage of all crash causes (>20%), with some one-mile segments exceeding 30%. This greatly surpasses the 4.6% National average for WVCs on rural highways.

Construction of this wildlife crossing and fencing along the corridor will not only reduce the number of WVCs but will also enhance habitat connectivity that is currently limited by the barrier I-17 created preventing safe wildlife movement.

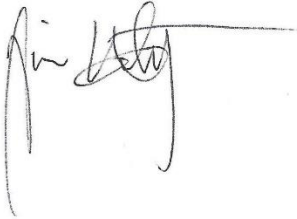
ADOT's previous experience with grade-separated wildlife crossings has clearly demonstrated these projects are effective in reducing WVCs by 90-100% as well as promoting permeability across the highway. This project is adjacent (approximately 5.6 miles) to and complements the recently awarded FHWA 2023 WCPP Willard Springs Overpass Project which AZSFWC also supported.

AZSFWC Support for ADOT-AZGFD Kachina Village Overpass Project Grant – 8-16-24

Arizona's wildlife will benefit with safe passage across this heavily used highway, as well as increase habitat connectivity too. At the same time, motorists along I-17 will have a safer journey with the anticipated reduction in WVCs.

AZSFWC and 30 of our organizations (list attached) strongly support this project and the funding request.

Thank you for your consideration of ADOT and AZGFD's WCPP application!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Unmacht", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jim Unmacht  
Executive Director



**AZSFWC Organizations Supporting the ADOT & AZGFD  
WCPP Grant Application for the  
Kachina Village Overpass Project**

Anglers United  
AZ Antelope Foundation  
AZ Chapter of Backcountry Hunters and Anglers  
AZ Chapter of National Wild Turkey Federation  
AZ Chapter of Safari Club International  
AZ Council of Trout Unlimited  
AZ Deer Association  
AZ Desert Bighorn Sheep Society  
AZ Elk Society  
AZ Flycasters Club  
AZ Houndsmen's Association  
AZ Mule Deer Organization  
AZ Outdoor Sports  
AZ Predator Callers  
Conservation First USA  
Conserve and Protect AZ  
Diablo Trust  
Friends of Buenos Aires National Wildlife Refuge  
Mogollon Sporting Association  
No Excuse Hunting and Outdoors  
Southern AZ Quail Forever  
Outdoor Experience 4 All  
Mule Deer Foundation  
Southwest Wildlife Foundation  
Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership  
Trust for Public Land  
Valley of the Sun Quail Forever  
Wildlife for Tomorrow  
Wildlife Water Works  
Yuma Valley Rod & Gun Club

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