

William Blaine "Bill" Richardson III
Governor
State of New Mexico
Office of the Governor
490 Old Santa Fe Trail, Room 400
Santa Fe, NM 87501

Dear Governor Richardson:

I write to express my support and the support of the City of El Paso for the Santa Teresa Rail Bypass (STRB) project. It has long been a part of El Paso's long term plans to relocate the freight rail line out of the city to relieve pressure on impacted neighborhoods in El Paso and Juarez. And, the long term fortunes of El Paso metropolitan area's economy depends on an orderly increase in the capacity of international freight traffic through this region.

I have discussed this project with Ciudad Juarez Mayor Jose Reyes Ferriz and we have both agreed that this would greatly benefit our El Paso/Juarez community. It is also our belief that the current rail freight crossing in the middle of our communities is not conducive to the great downtowns and should be relocated out to Santa Teresa and to the eastern part of El Paso County.

One additional concern of mine is that of safety. One of our first neighborhoods in El Paso is that of Chihuahuita, which began to form in 1827. It is located directly on the physical border with Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. This historical area has narrow streets and only one point of ingress and egress to and from the neighborhood. When trains going into and out of Mexico are backed-up, access to the residents' homes are blocked for several hours and thus creates a severe safety hazard.

The City of El Paso will cooperate with the State of New Mexico, Ciudad Juarez, Chihuahua State, and, it is anticipated, the State of Texas in moving the STRB project forward quickly. We ask that the State of New Mexico resume the discussion and coordinated expenditure of the \$14 million congressional earmark for the rail relocation study with the State of Texas and the City of El Paso.

Please keep me posted of progress on the STRB project and make me aware of any way I might assist in moving it forward. Lastly, I would appreciate a letter of support with our efforts to move the current freight crossing that connects the two downtown areas of El Paso and Ciudad Juarez.

Sincerely

John Cook
Mayor

CHIHUAHUITA

