Interstate 11 Corridor

Request: Work with the Arizona Congressional Delegation to designate the I-11 corridor to facilitate intermountain freight movement and international trade from Canada and Mexico.

Regional Issue

Interstate 11 represents a new north-south travel corridor connecting communities in the Intermountain West. Following the opening of the interstate-standard Hoover Dam bypass bridge, several states, including Arizona and Nevada, are working with Congress to seek interstate designation of a freeway corridor between Phoenix and Las Vegas, and potentially to destinations in the Pacific Northwest. By providing these connections, Interstate 11 improves upon trade and commerce opportunities for the MAG region with better links to San Francisco, Salt Lake City, Portland and Seattle. The corridor also relieves the Interstate 5 Freeway in California. In Arizona, Interstate 11 has been identified to replace US-93 and includes the proposed 152-mile Hassayampa Freeway west and south of Phoenix.

Background

- Initially accepted as an illustrative project corridor of the Regional Transportation Plan in the Hassayampa Valley and Hidden Valley Framework Studies by the MAG Regional Council in 2008 and 2009, respectively.
- The Arizona Department of Transportation Board approved the entire corridor, including US-93, as an Interstate Corridor when bqAZ was approved in January 2010.
- Business communities in Phoenix and Las Vegas have championed the Interstate 11 corridor with a private sector/public sector coalition seeking interstate designation.
- The Hoover Dam on the Colorado River, once thought of as a significant barrier to an interstate route, was greatly improved by the Hoover Dam Bypass Bridge that opened to traffic in 2010.
- The Arizona Department of Transportation has been upgrading the US-93 roadway to four-lane divided highway status over the past 15 years.
- Environmental studies proposed in 2011 for the Wickenburg to Interstate 10 segment in Western Maricopa County.

PROPOSED I-11 ROUTE

The proposed I-11 route would provide an alternate north/south corridor.

Benefits

- Improve travel reliability for the Intermountain West.
- Add commercial capabilities.
- Provide relief for congested Western United States north-south corridors Interstates 5 and 15.
- Enhance economic benefit by linking trade between ports in Mexico and the Intermountain West.

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Interstate 11 Corridor (continued)

Intermountain West Issue:
Early planning for the Interstate Highway System identified numerous routes in the heavily populated areas east of the Mississippi River. This trend has continued since the system was established in 1956 with more routes added in the Eastern United States. There has been little significant addition of interstate routes in the Western United States other than an extension of Interstate 70 west of Denver to Interstate 15 in Utah, and a connection between Interstates 84 and 90 in Oregon and Washington State. Despite these additions, population and employment growth in the West has outpaced eastern states, and the demand for travel along the few western interstate corridors has grown to where metropolitan-type congestion is common along relatively rural routes. The introduction of Interstate 11 to the western United States highway network provides considerable benefit to the Intermountain West's key overtaxed north-south corridors: Interstate 5 and Interstate 15.

Building Interstate 11, a new corridor, provides an alternative for intercity travel throughout the west without having to focus travel in a few corridors that traverse some of the West's largest population centers, including Los Angeles, San Francisco, Sacramento, Salt Lake City, and Portland. Interstate 11 not only provides needed connectivity in the Intermountain West, but enhances the American transportation system, and improves its reliability for better trade and commerce opportunities.

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UNITED STATES INTERSTATE FREEWAY SYSTEM

Inland Ports and Rail Connections

Request: Work cooperatively with the business community, Congress, the Arizona Legislature, and the Governor's Office to provide incentives to encourage the development of an inland port.

Regional Issue

A large portion of the nation's freight passes through Arizona, but more than 62 percent of that freight simply passes through without any economic benefit to Arizona. Studies are being conducted to examine the movement of goods through the Sun Corridor and to propose strategies for further developing an economical, safe and efficient goods movement system that will enhance regional mobility.

Background

Of particular interest is the development of inland ports in the megaregion. International seaport expansions in Mexico, such as Manzanillo, Lázaro Cárdenas, Guaymas and Punta Colonet, could double the amount of freight

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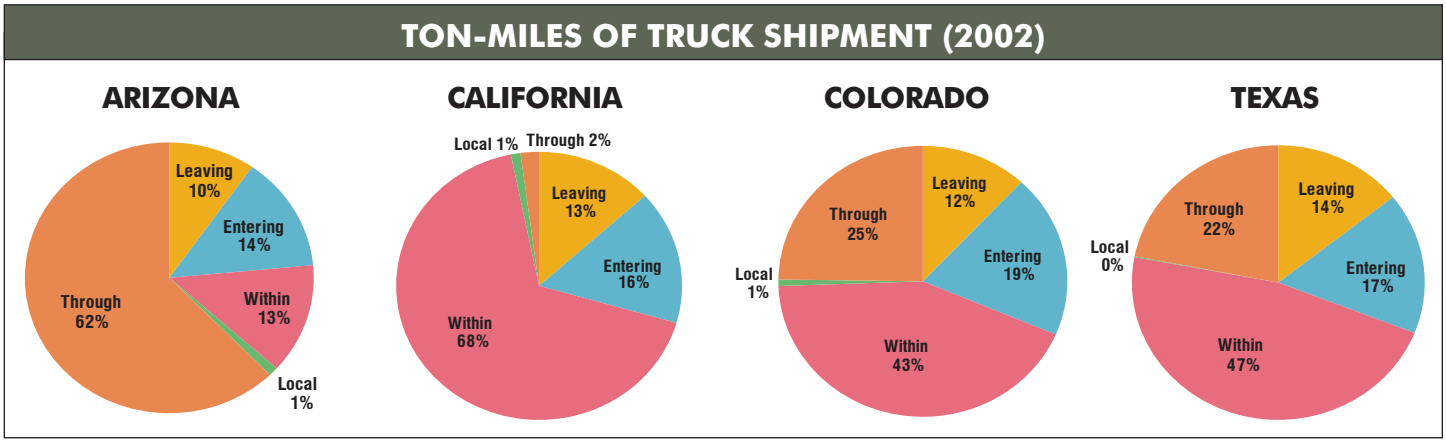
INLAND PORT OPPORTUNITIES

Expansion of seaports in Mexico including Punta Colonet and Guaymas could have a large effect on the freight flowing in and through Arizona.

TON-MILES OF TRUCK SHIPMENT (2002)



In the charts above, notice Arizona's large percentage of through freight compared to other western states.

Inland Ports and Rail Connections (continued)

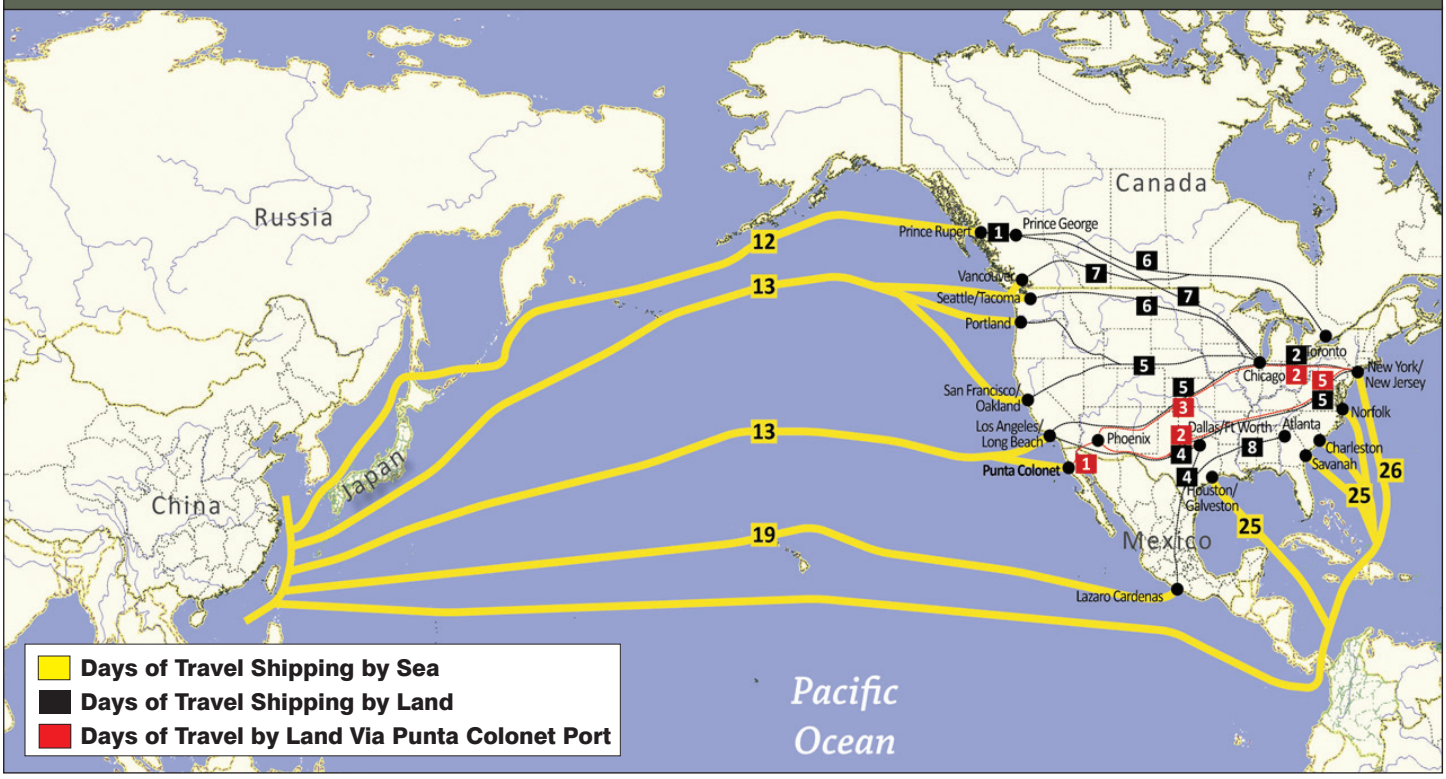
coming through Western states like Arizona. A new port at Punta Colonet would also assist an Arizona inland port in exporting to other countries. It is important to note that Mexico is the 15th largest economy in the world.

With the U.S. population projected to reach as high as 450 million people by 2050, freight volumes from the Far East will increase significantly. Present Pacific Ocean ports, such as the port of Long Beach in the Los Angeles region, are at or near capacity. Mexico has targeted building more sea ports to add West Coast shipping capacity.

Benefits

Arizona and the Sun Corridor are uniquely positioned to assist Mexico in adding that capacity by developing an inland port in the Sun Corridor. Inland ports provide a significant opportunity to expand upon the present Arizona jobs base. For example, more than a logistics, warehousing and distribution center, an inland port could include significant manufacturing and/or final assembly.

INTERNATIONAL SHIPPING DURATIONS (IN DAYS)



The map above illustrates a reduction in the number of shipping days from the Far East to the U.S. East Coast via the Punta Colonet Port and passage through Arizona.

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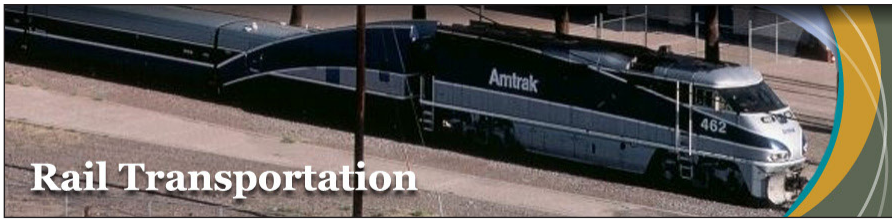

MARICOPA ASSOCIATION of GOVERNMENTS

Wellton Branch Railroad Line

Request: Work in partnership with the federal government, the regional business community, the State of Arizona, and the Union Pacific Railroad to put the Wellton Branch line back in service, or develop an alternative line, to facilitate freight movement and Amtrak service to the Valley.

Regional Issue

The Wellton Branch is a segment of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Phoenix Subdivision through west central Arizona. A forty-five mile segment of the Wellton Branch between Phoenix and Buckeye/Arlington has significant industrial development along its right-of-way and is currently in service. The McElhaney Cattle Company has trackage rights on more than six miles of the branch east of Wellton and handles about 11,000 carloads of grain annually. However, approximately 80 miles of track is out of service between the communities of Arlington and Roll. This segment is used for railroad car storage. The entire line would require rehabilitation in order to be reactivated *(see Figure 1)*.

WELLTON BRANCH REHAB AREA

Figure 1: ADOT State Rail Plan/BQAZ.

Background

- The Wellton Branch was built by the Southern Pacific Railroad between 1923-1926 and opened for through passenger service to Phoenix in 1927.
- The branch has been owned by Union Pacific Railroad since 1996.
- The final Amtrak Sunset Limited passenger train service was in June 1996.
- It was closed to through freight in 1997 after all Phoenix-Yuma traffic was rerouted east through Picacho Jct.
- An 80-mile portion between Arlington and Roll is used for surplus railcar storage.
- Potential for reactivation will contribute direct benefits to the CANAMEX Corridor and Amtrak.

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WELLTON BRANCH LINE

Figure 2: Out of service Welton Branch near Hyder, Arizona (ADOT/M. Pearsall.)

Wellton Branch Railroad Line (continued)

Benefits

Improvements to key rail branch lines of the Union Pacific Railroad will improve freight movements within Arizona and the MAG Region by providing better connections to Southern California and Mexico. This will also help commodity distribution and manufacturing throughout the state.

Reestablishing service on the UPRR Wellton Branch to Phoenix from the west to the UPRR Sunset Route, as well as reconnecting Phoenix to Amtrak's national passenger rail network will help create a comprehensive and well connected railroad system in Arizona. This will also help alleviate the need for current Union Pacific Railroad freight trains from having to make the unnecessary, extra-miles-detour between Yuma, Picacho Jct. (Eloy)/Tucson, Coolidge and the East Valley to reach Phoenix and the West Valley.

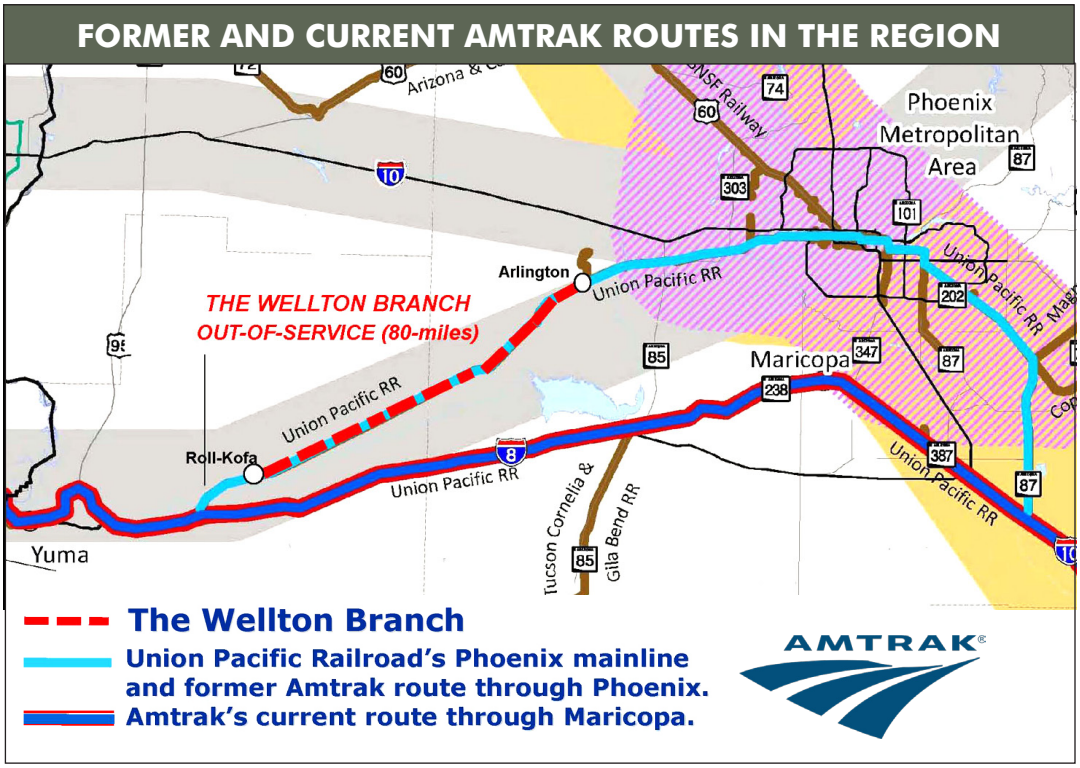

Figure 3: Welton Branch Map. (MAG)

The potential of a new thirty-mile long railroad line connecting the communities of Buckeye and Gila Bend would also contribute to the development of an enhanced CANAMEX transportation alternative for the Hassayampa Valley and the SR-85 corridors.

Figure 4: Wellton Branch meets UPRR Sunset Route Mainline at Wellton Jct., Arizona. (ADOT/M. Pearsall)

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