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**Congress of the United States**  
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August 5, 2014

Mr. Raymond Suazo  
State Director  
Bureau of Land Management  
Arizona State Office  
One North Central Avenue, Suite 800  
Phoenix, Arizona 85004

Dear Director Suazo:

Thank you for taking the time to meet in my office and for your follow-up letter dated July 21, 2014, regarding Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) use and mining claims on public lands in and around La Paz County, Arizona. As you are aware, this is a very important issue to residents in Arizona and other relevant stakeholders. For some time now and as discussed, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) has been involved in developing an extensive management plan for land and trail access. This topic has generated heated debate and much concern. I was pleased to hear you took the time to watch the YouTube video of the April 2014 town hall I held on this subject and hear many of these concerns firsthand.

In my many communications with constituents regarding this issue, including this town hall in Parker, AZ, residents have expressed strong concerns with the process in which proposed changes to land access have been made. My constituents would like to ensure their voices are being heard and that the BLM strongly consider public comment before pushing forward with a management plan for trails and public land use.

First and foremost, an updated map that details existing trails in the area is essential for a proper study of OHV use and to evaluate accessibility to trails and roads as well as points of interest for both recreational and mining activity. There seems to be great opportunity to partner with private outdoor groups who can contribute to a comprehensive mapping initiative.

Access to mining claims in the area must also be an integral part of any trail management plan. As you know, mining has long standing historical, cultural, and legal precedent in Arizona and on the public lands in this area in particular. It is important that these rules are communicated clearly and transparently to the public. Enforcement of BLM rules regarding trail access must be consistent with the regulations and laws that allow for encampments and access to legitimate mining claims.

When considering changes to access on public lands, such as those contained in the initial proposed La Posa Travel Management Plan, it is important that serious consideration be given to the outsized role that OHV use for recreation and mining purposes plays in the economy of local towns, counties, and the State as a whole. A study by Arizona State University estimated that OHV recreationists contributed more than \$4 billion to the State's economy which supports over 40,000 jobs and contributes more nearly \$200 million in tax revenue to State and local governments.

Given the large impact any change in public land access may have on local communities and in an effort to keep constituents informed and engaged, I respectfully request that you review and provide answers to the following questions:

1. What is the current status of the La Posa Travel Management Plan?
2. You mentioned in the recent meeting in my office in Washington, and then again in the July 21<sup>st</sup> letter, that revised maps of current roads and trails in relation to public access to La Paz and surrounding areas would be released to the general public. When will my constituents and my office receive a copy of these maps? Will there be an opportunity for public comment on the maps before they are finalized?
3. There were significant issues in terms of stakeholder involvement with the rollout of the initial La Posa Travel Management Plan. What plans does the agency have to prevent past mistakes and ensure stakeholder involvement?
4. Previous media reports indicated the BLM was looking at closing as many as 51 percent of all trails when formulating the La Posa Travel Management Plan. Does the revised proposal being discussed have any plans to close or limit access to OHV use, or to close or limit access to patented and unpatented mining claims or state prospecting leases?
5. What are the planning alternatives currently under consideration by the BLM for La Posa TMP? Has a preferred alternative been developed? What percentage of existing roads and trails open to OHV use are proposed to remain open to the public under this preferred alternative? I would like to be made aware of the criteria used to justify the loss of access to roads and trails proposed to be closed under this alternative.
6. Has there been a Socio-Economic Study performed to examine the impacts of the proposed TMP to La Paz County?

I look forward to your timely response to these questions. As the Representative for the people of 4<sup>th</sup> Congressional District, I am committed to be a resource to your agency as you continue to seek input and cooperation from the public as your agency pursues a travel management plan.

Sincerely,



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.

Member of Congress