U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Western Pacific Region

P.O. Box 92007
Worldway Postal Center
Los Angeles, CA 90009

August 4, 2005

Steve Thompson
Regional Director
California/Nevada Operations Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
2800 Cottage Way, Suite W2606
Sacramento, CA 95825

Dear Mr. Thompson:

We are preparing a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada (LAS). The purpose of the Proposed Action is to increase safety and efficiency, and to reduce delays by utilizing advanced navigational systems and de-conflicting air traffic routes, which would specifically be accomplished through the proposed modification to the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) Procedure at McCarran International Airport. This modification will better accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25.

We have defined the Area of Potential Effect (the Study Area) to begin at the western end of Runway 25 of McCarran International Airport and continue on a five mile radius through the west, northwest, and northeast quadrants encompassing airspace also currently used for aircraft operations from North Las Vegas Airport and Nellis Air Force Base. The Study Area extends to the outer limits of the Las Vegas Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON), a distance of approximately 40 Nautical Miles (NM). It encompasses airspace beginning at an altitude of 3,000 Above Ground Level (AGL) and extending upward to 10,000 feet AGL.

The Proposed Action will improve efficiency in LAS airspace, ensure LAS can meet its future forecast demand and reduce its potential for future delays. The proposed air traffic route changes do not include any ground-based construction activities that might affect fish or wildlife species. However, to assist in the assessment of any potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed project, we are requesting a list of any species listed or proposed to be listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act. To assist in your response, we have attached a brief project description. The project description defines the Area or Potential Effect (or Study Area) and Exhibit 3 provides an illustration of the study area. Please indicate any critical habitat that falls within the Area of Potential Effect (or Study Area) and return within 30 days from the date of this notice, or no later than September 5, 2005.

Thank you for your assistance with this matter. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Kathryn Higgins, Environmental Specialist, at 310-725-6597.

Sincerely,

John Clancy
Area Director, Western Terminal Operations

CC: Kathryn Higgins, Environmental Specialist, FAA SEA Project Manager
Enclosure (1)

U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Western Pacific Region

P.O. Box 92007
Worldway Postal Center
Los Angeles, CA 90009

August 4, 2005

Ronald M. James
State Historic Preservation Officer and Historian
State Historic Preservation Office
Nevada Department of Cultural Affairs
100 North Stewart Street
Carson City, NV 89701-4285

Dear Mr. James:

We are preparing a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada (LAS). The purpose of the Proposed Action is to increase safety and efficiency, and to reduce delays by utilizing advanced navigational systems and de-conflicting air traffic routes, which would specifically be accomplished through the proposed modification to the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) Procedure at McCarran International Airport. This modification will better accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25.

Because federal funds are being used for this project, the design, training, and implementation of the proposed procedural modifications must be accomplished in accordance with our regulations. Therefore, this project is considered an "undertaking" as defined by Title 36, Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Part 800.16(y), and therefore, is subject to the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended.

We have defined the Area of Potential Effect (the Study Area) to begin at the western end of Runway 25 of McCarran International Airport and continue on a five mile radius through the west, northwest, and northeast quadrants encompassing airspace also currently used for aircraft operations from North Las Vegas Airport and Nellis Air Force Base. The Study Area extends to the outer limits of the Las Vegas Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON), a distance of approximately 40 Nautical Miles (NM). It encompasses airspace beginning at an altitude of 3,000 Above Ground Level (AGL) and extending upward to 10,000 feet AGL. To assist in your understanding of the project, we have attached a brief project description. The project description defines the Area or Potential Effect (or Study Area) and Exhibit 3 provides an illustration of the Study Area.

The Proposed Action will improve efficiency in LAS airspace, ensure LAS can meet its future forecast demand and reduce its potential for future delays. The proposed air traffic route changes do not include any ground-based construction activities that might affect archaeological or historic properties. Separate consultation with the appropriate Tribal Governments and their designated Tribal Historic Preservation Office is being conducted in accordance with Executive Order 13175. Therefore, based on our consideration that this Proposed Action might not affect historic properties, we have determined in accordance with Title 36, CFR, Part 800.3(a)(1) that the proposed undertaking has no potential to cause effects on archaeological or historic properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. It is our intent to incorporate this information and the results of the coordination effort into the Draft SEA.

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Los Angeles, CA 90009

To further fulfill our obligation under Title 36, CFR, Part 800.4(d), interested parties and agencies will be notified of our determination through publication of the Final SEA. We trust that this action, along with an upcoming Notice of Proposed Action letter and public meetings to be held on the Draft SEA, fulfills our obligations under Title 36, CFR, Part 800.4(a). We respectfully request your concurrence with this determination.

If we can be of further assistance, please contact Kathryn Higgins, Environmental Specialist, at 310-725-6597.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

John Clancy
Area Director, Western Terminal Operations

CC: Kathryn Higgins, Environmental Specialist, FAA SEA Project Manager

Enclosure (1)

August 8, 2005

[Insert Name & Address Info]

RE: Supplemental Environmental Assessment, Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada

Dear [Insert Name]:

This letter is to inform you that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), Western Pacific Region, intends to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) to review potential impacts associated with a proposed modification to the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada (LAS). This modification will better accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25. Landrum & Brown (acting as a contractor to the FAA) will prepare the SEA for the Proposed Project in accordance with FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*.

On behalf of the FAA, we are sending this letter for the following reasons:

1. To advise you of the initiation of the study;

2. To solicit your agency's comments regarding known environmental resources and sensitivities associated with the Proposed Project,

3. To request any background information that your agency may have regarding the Propose Project, and

4. To obtain an understanding of any issues, concerns, policies or regulations that your agency may have regarding the analysis that will be undertaken in the SEA.

To assist in your response, we have attached a brief Project description. We also ask that Responsible agencies indicate their statutory responsibilities and the name for the contact person in your agency, when responding.

As part of the SEA development process, the FAA is requesting your comments on the Proposed Project prior to the completion and circulation of the Draft SEA. After release of the Draft SEA, public information meetings will be conducted during the Draft SEA comment period. The Notice of Availability for review and comment on the Draft SEA, and for the public information meetings, will also be provided upon release of the Draft SEA.

Please submit any response you may have by **September 1, 2005**. Your response, and any questions or comments, should be directed to:

Landrum & Brown
ATTN: Sara Hassert, Consultant
8755 W. Higgins Rd., Ste. 850
Chicago, IL 60631

Ph. 773-628-2909
E-Mail: shassert@landrum-brown.com

Thank you for your cooperation. If you have any questions, please contact me at 760-723-2442 or via e-mail at: clieber@landrum-brown.com/.

Sincerely,
LANDRUM & BROWN

Charles Lieber
Senior Project Manager

CC: Kathryn Higgins, Environmental Specialist, FAA SEA Project Manager

Attachment

Proposed Modification to Four Corner-Post Plan
McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada
Draft Supplemental Environmental Assessment

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PROJECT

The following report includes a brief description of the Proposed Project, its Purpose and Need, and its Alternatives. Descriptions of the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences of the Proposed Project are currently in development.

BACKGROUND

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to modify an existing departure procedure that was implemented as part of the Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, on October 16, 2001. The Four Corner-Post Plan was developed and implemented to address growing airspace and air traffic control inefficiencies caused by increases in air traffic in the Las Vegas TRACON airspace.

The environmental analysis will be a supplement to the 2001 Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) for the Four Corner-Post Plan and will be titled a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA). The SEA will only review potential impacts associated with a proposed modification to the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada. The STAAV is being modified to better accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25.

An Environmental Assessment (EA) or even a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) requires analysis and documentation similar to that of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS), but with somewhat less detail and less intensive coordination than is required with an EIS. Depending upon whether certain environmental thresholds of significance are exceeded, an SEA will either lead to a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) or to the subsequent preparation of an EIS.

A Draft SEA will be made available for review and comment as part of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C., § 432 et seq.). After review and preparation of responses to the public comments a Final SEA will be produced. The federal decision-makers will use the Final SEA in their determination to approve or disapprove the Proposed Action.

The format and content of the SEA conforms to the regulations of the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA (title 40, CFR 1500-1508). The document also conforms to the environmental orders of the US Department of Transportation (DOT), DOT Order 5610.1C, *Procedures for Considering Environmental Impacts,* and the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), FAA Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures*.

PROPOSED FEDERAL ACTION

The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to adjust the Four Corner-Post Plan by modifying the STAAV RNAV SID to accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25. See **Exhibit 1** for the current Runway 25 departure procedures at McCarran International Airport (LAS) and **Exhibit 2** for the Proposed Action which indicates the modification to current Runway 25 departure procedure.

More specifically, the FAA actions required to implement the Proposed Action include:

- Refinement of the specific parameters and language defining the procedure.
- Flight testing of the procedure for conformance with safety standards.
- Modification of air traffic control orders and operational procedures by the Las Vegas TRACON.
- Training of controllers in the use of the procedure.
- Publication of the procedure in the FAA's U.S. Terminal Procedures publication.

STUDY AREA FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

For the purpose of this Supplemental Environmental Assessment, the Study Area (or Area of Potential Affect) that encompasses the modification to the STAAV RNAV SID for Runway 25 departures begins at the western end of Runway 25 of McCarran International Airport and continues on a five mile radius through the west, northwest, and northeast quadrants encompassing airspace also currently used for aircraft operations from North Las Vegas Airport and Nellis Air Force Base. The Study Area extends to the outer limits of the Las Vegas Terminal Radar Approach Control (TRACON), a distance of approximately 40 Nautical Miles (NM). It encompasses airspace beginning at ground level and extending upward to 10,000 feet Above Ground Lever (AGL) **Exhibit 3** depicts the Study Area associated with the Proposed Action.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) will assess the potential environmental impacts of a proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan that was implemented at McCarran International Airport (LAS), Las Vegas, Nevada, in 2001. The Four Corner-Post Plan was developed and implemented at LAS in 2001 as a direct result of the past and projected growth of air traffic at LAS. In furtherance of the Purpose and Need of the 2001 Four Corner-Post Plan Final Environmental Assessment, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) proposes to adjust the Four Corner-Post Plan by modifying the STAAV Area Navigation (RNAV) Standard Instrument Departure (SID) to accommodate eastbound departures from Runway 25.[1]

Because the document will be a supplement to the 2001 Final Environmental Assessment (FEA) for the Four Corner-Post Plan, the Purpose and Need outlined in the 2001 FEA will been carried forward into the SEA. However, an important difference from the 2001 FEA is that the purpose of the SEA is to study *only* the potential environmental impacts associated with modifying the STAAV RNAV SID (the Proposed Action).

The following is a summary of the **Purposes** of the Proposed Action:

- Improve efficiency in LAS airspace;
- Ensure LAS can meet its forecast future demand;
- Reduce the potential at LAS for future delays;
- Provide operational benefits to the airlines and other users of LAS;
- Modifications to the STAAV RNAV SID for eastbound departures from Runway 25 at LAS would accomplish the Purpose of the Proposed Action.

The following is a summary of the **Needs** for the Proposed Action:

- The implementation of operational changes at LAS is needed as a direct result of increases in total passengers and aircraft operations levels.
- Aviation activity at LAS has recovered from the events of September 11, 2001 faster than at other US airports. Annual operations are to increase at a rate of approximately 2.41 percent per year.
- The sustainable annual capacity of LAS is 625,000 annual aircraft operations, based upon an average delay exceeding 6 minutes per aircraft operation,

[1] Standard Instrument Departure (SID) procedures were formerly referred to as Departure Procedures (DP) by the FAA. However, that nomenclature has changed since the issuance of the FONSI/ROD for the 2001 Four Corner-Post Plan at Las Vegas.

assuming that 80 percent of aircraft operations are conducted by scheduled air carriers and commuter operators. The 2001 Four Corner-Post Plan Final Environmental Assessment presented annual operations of 622,000 by the year 2005 at LAS.

- The airlines serving destinations east of Las Vegas are now seeking an RNAV right-turn SID from Runway 25 for eastbound traffic. The airlines serving eastern destinations from LAS believe the longer left-turn leg length now required with the Four Corner-Post Plan has imposed an unfair cost burden on them. This concern has escalated as fuel prices have increased in 2004 and 2005. The air carriers serving LAS have made a substantial financial investment by modernizing their fleet and want to obtain the highest level of efficiency possible on their investment. An unanticipated impact of the RNAV procedures has been the inducement of departure delays negating the intended airspace efficiencies. The requirement for all Runway 25 and Runway 19 departures to fly over a single waypoint (ROPPR) southwest of the airport has required ATC to provide additional spacing for a Runway 19 departure when preceded by a Runway 25 departure. This circumstance has been exacerbated by the continual increase in traffic demand.

- The final need for the Proposed Action is to recapture the effectiveness that was lost from the reduction in the use of the right-turn procedure from Runway 25 for eastbound traffic as part of the implementation of the Four Corner-Post Plan at LAS (the need for the Proposed Action). The proposed solution to the problem is to modify the STAAV RNAV SID for Runway 25 departures to enhance eastbound traffic at LAS (the purpose of the Proposed Action).

ALTERNATIVES

Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) Order 1050.1E, *Environmental Impacts: Policies and Procedures,* cites the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR 1502.1D) regarding the development and evaluation of alternatives in an EA or SEA. In summary, the EA or SEA should present the positive and negative aspects of the proposal, reasonable alternatives to the proposal and the No Action Alternative in comparative form to provide the decision makers and the general public information on the merits of each alternative.

CRITERIA FOR SCREENING THE INITIAL ALTERNATIVES

The factors that provide the catalyst for amending this air traffic control procedures are, in many cases, the same factors used to evaluate the impacts of the original proposed procedural change found in the 2001 FEA. Because the document is a supplement to the 2001 FEA, regarding the proposed modification to the STAAV RNAV SID for eastbound departures from Runway 25 at LAS, the same criteria used in the 2001 FEA will be used for evaluation of the Proposed Project alternatives.

- **Safety** – Does the alternative maintain or improve the level of safety under

varying conditions?

- **Traffic Management Efficiency** – Does the alternative provide an efficient method for improving the flow and management of air traffic? The route geometry should minimize intersecting routes and evenly distribute air traffic volume between routes to minimize the need to reroute traffic, thus improving the controller's ability to separate, sequence and meter traffic.

- **Air Traffic Controller Utilization** – Does the alternative provide sector boundaries that allow air traffic controllers to monitor and direct traffic with the least amount of controller/controller and controller/pilot communications? Controller/controller communication is required when an aircraft moves from one sector to another. Controller/pilot communication is required when the controller issues control instructions to amend an assigned altitude, course or speed.

- **Compatibility with Special Use Airspace (SUA)** – Does the alternative avoid SUA and reduce the interaction between civil and military aircraft?

- **Equipment Compatibility**– Does the alternative consider the compatibility of existing air navigation and air traffic control equipment and the availability of this equipment to FAA facilities and airspace users?

- **Compatibility with Other Procedures** – Does the proposed route structure fit within the regional route structure that will be unchanged?

- **Compatibility with Informal Noise Abatement Procedures –** Does the alternative comply with all informal noise abatement procedures in place at LAS?

- **Compatibility with Airspace Sector Design Criteria** – Does the alternative provide a sufficient volume of airspace that allows air traffic controllers to separate, sequence, and meter efficiently?

- **Community Compatibility** – Does the alternative reduce aircraft over-flight of the more urbanized areas below 10,000 feet AGL?

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ALTERNATIVES

The elements of the Proposed Alternatives are described below.

Alternative 1 – No Action

In accordance with CEQ, Section 1502.14 (d) [40 CFR 1502.14 (d)], the No Action Alternative (Alternative 1) was examined. The No Action Alternative would leave the current Four Corner Post System in place. Departures from Runway 25 would continue to turn left with the potential to create departure delays as operations increase. The Clark County Department of Aviation (CCDOA) would continue to have concerns about meeting forecast demand and airlines with eastbound flights would continue to experience departure delays and additional flying miles, as well as incur additional operating costs.

- **Safety –** The No Action Alternative is safe and will continue to remain so.

- **Traffic Management Efficiency –** The No Action Alternative is not compatible because it does not provide the necessary traffic management efficiency to manage the increasing demand. This inefficiency has become more exacerbated as demand has returned to pre-September 11, 2001 levels. During peak departure periods, loss of efficiency is incurred because increased separation is required between successive departures. The current procedures direct all Runway 25 departures over a single fix south of the airport. This routing results in additional flying miles and fuel burn for eastbound flights.

- **Air Traffic Controller Utilization –** The No Action Alternative is not compatible because the requirement to route all Runway 25 departures over a single fix south of the Airport would result in increased separation between successive departures during periods of high departure demand. The requirement for increased spacing requires coordination between controllers and has the result of placing additional demands on the TRACON and ATCT.

- **Compatibility with Special Use Airspace (SUA) –** The No Action Alternative is compatible with existing Special Use Airspace.

- **Equipment Compatibility –** The No Action Alternative is compatible because it would not require additional air traffic equipment or on-board navigation systems.

- **Compatibility with Other Procedures –** The No Action Alternative is compatible with other terminal air traffic procedures currently in use.

- **Compatibility with Informal Noise Abatement Procedures –** The No Action Alternative is compatible with existing Informal Noise Abatement Procedures.

- **Compatibility with Airspace Sector Design Criteria –** The No Action Alternative is compatible with the design criteria of Las Vegas TRACON airspace.

- **Community Compatibility –** The No Action Alternative is not compatible because it will not reduce flights below 10,000 feet AGL over the more urbanized areas. With the most recent changes to the Runway 25 RNAV SIDs, the No Action Alternative meets the intent of conformance with the Cooperative Management Area (CMA). However, some residents of Enterprise and members of the Enterprise Town Advisory Board would continue to believe the procedures were imposing an undue burden on their community.

Alternative 2 – Proposed Action

The Proposed Action (Alternative 2) would modify existing air traffic control procedures by modifying the STAAV RNAV SID. It would expand the use of the STAAV RNAV SID for eastbound flights departing Runway 25 at LAS. It is estimated that 33 percent of departures from Runway 25 would be changed from the TRALR RNAV SID to the STAAV RNAV SID. Alternative 2 would address the concerns of CCDOA that future increases in traffic could not be accommodated on the existing departure routes without causing airport delays. It would address the desire of airlines serving McCarran International Airport for shorter flying distances to destinations east of LAS. It would reduce controller workload previously experienced with the OVETO SID and the excessive coordination currently required by routing all Runway 25 departures over a single fix south of the airport.

- **Safety –** Alternative 2 is compatible because it would maintain an equivalent level of safety under varying conditions by providing an alternative route for aircraft destined for airports east of LAS. It would provide additional airspace capacity to meet future forecast demand.

- **Traffic Management Efficiency –** Alternative 2 is compatible because improved efficiency would result as aircraft are rerouted from the TRALR RNAV SID to the STAAV RNAV SID. An estimated 33 percent of Runway 25 departures would be eligible for the STAAV procedure. Departure delays would be reduced thus alleviating on-airport ground congestion. Aircraft assigned the proposed new route would realize shortened leg lengths and reduced fuel burn.

- **Air Traffic Controller Utilization –** Alternative 2 is compatible and would provide a new RNAV departure procedure that would specify finite waypoints and associated minimum crossing altitudes that would ensure aircraft on this route do not infringe upon the airspace delegated to Nellis Air Traffic Control Facility (NATCF). The specified crossing altitudes would also ensure the departing aircraft are safely above the altitudes used by aircraft on arrival routes from the east. Air traffic controller workload is reduced by the reduction in coordination between FAA controllers at LAS ATCT, LAS TRACON and military controllers at NATCF as well as by the elimination of the need to provide radar vectors to the departing aircraft. Alternative 2 would reduce controller workload by reducing the need for additional in-trail separation during periods of peak departure demand.

- **Compatibility with Special Use Airspace (SUA) -** Alternative 2 is compatible with current Special Use Airspace and procedures.

- **Equipment Compatibility –** Alternative 2 is compatible because no additional equipment is necessary on board the aircraft or in the Las Vegas TRACON for implementation.

- **Compatibility with Other Procedures –** Alternative 2 is fully compatible with the terminal air traffic control procedures in use at LAS and NATCF. It does not require any adjustment of airspace boundaries by Los Angeles ARTCC or special flight crew training by the airlines serving LAS.

- **Compatibility with Informal Noise Abatement Procedure –** Alternative 2 is compatible with existing Informal Noise Abatement Procedures.

- **Compatibility with Airspace Sector Design Criteria –** Alternative 2 is compatible with the design criteria of Las Vegas TRACON airspace. It would make the best use of available airspace by providing an additional departure route with shortened leg lengths and reduction in controller workload.

- **Community Compatibility –** Alternative 2 is not compatible because it will not reduce flights below 10,000 feet AGL over the more urbanized areas.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Within an SEA, this section's primary function is to describe pre-project conditions, not action-induced impacts. The section provides a baseline description of the existing environment's biological, economic, physical, and social conditions. The Affected Environment section of the SEA is currently in development.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Within an SEA, this section evaluates the potential for environmental impacts associated with the Proposed Action, the No Action Alternative, and any other considered alternatives on a number of specific resource categories. The information presented in this section will enable the reader to clearly understand the environmental characteristics that would be affected by the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative. The Environmental Consequences section of the SEA is currently in development.

Exhibit 1 : Current Runway 25 Departure Procedures

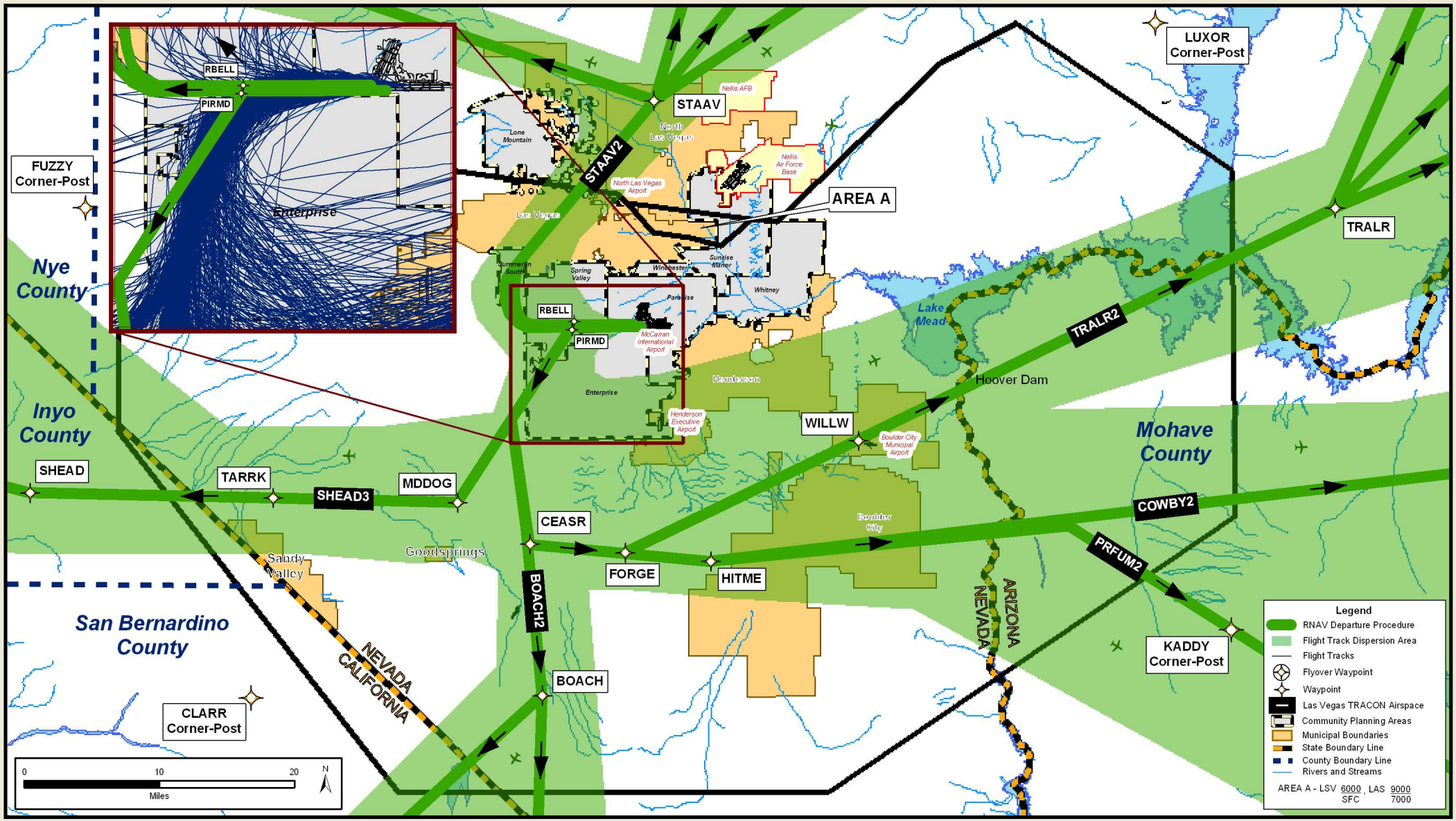

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Exhibit 2 : Proposed Action

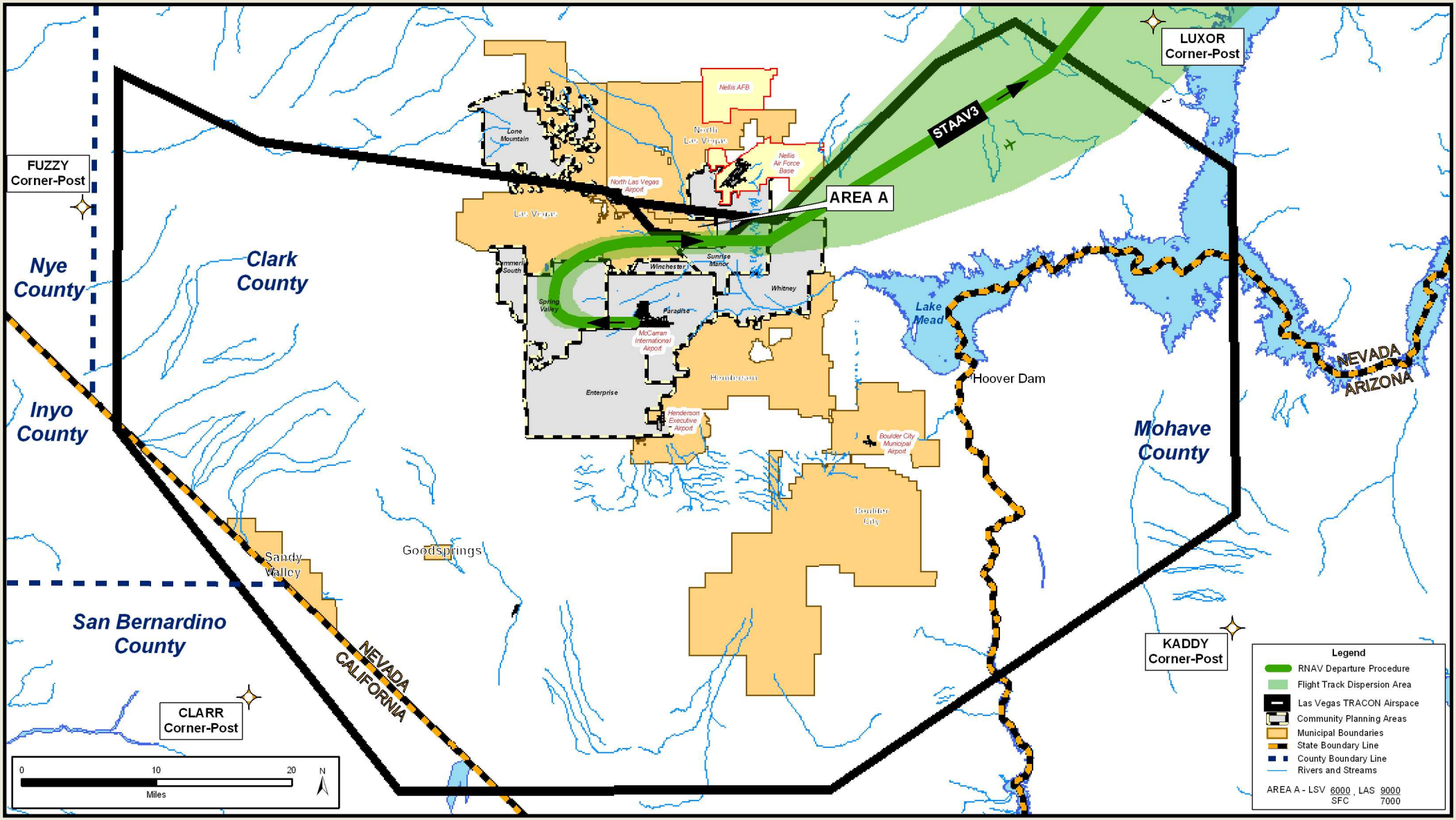

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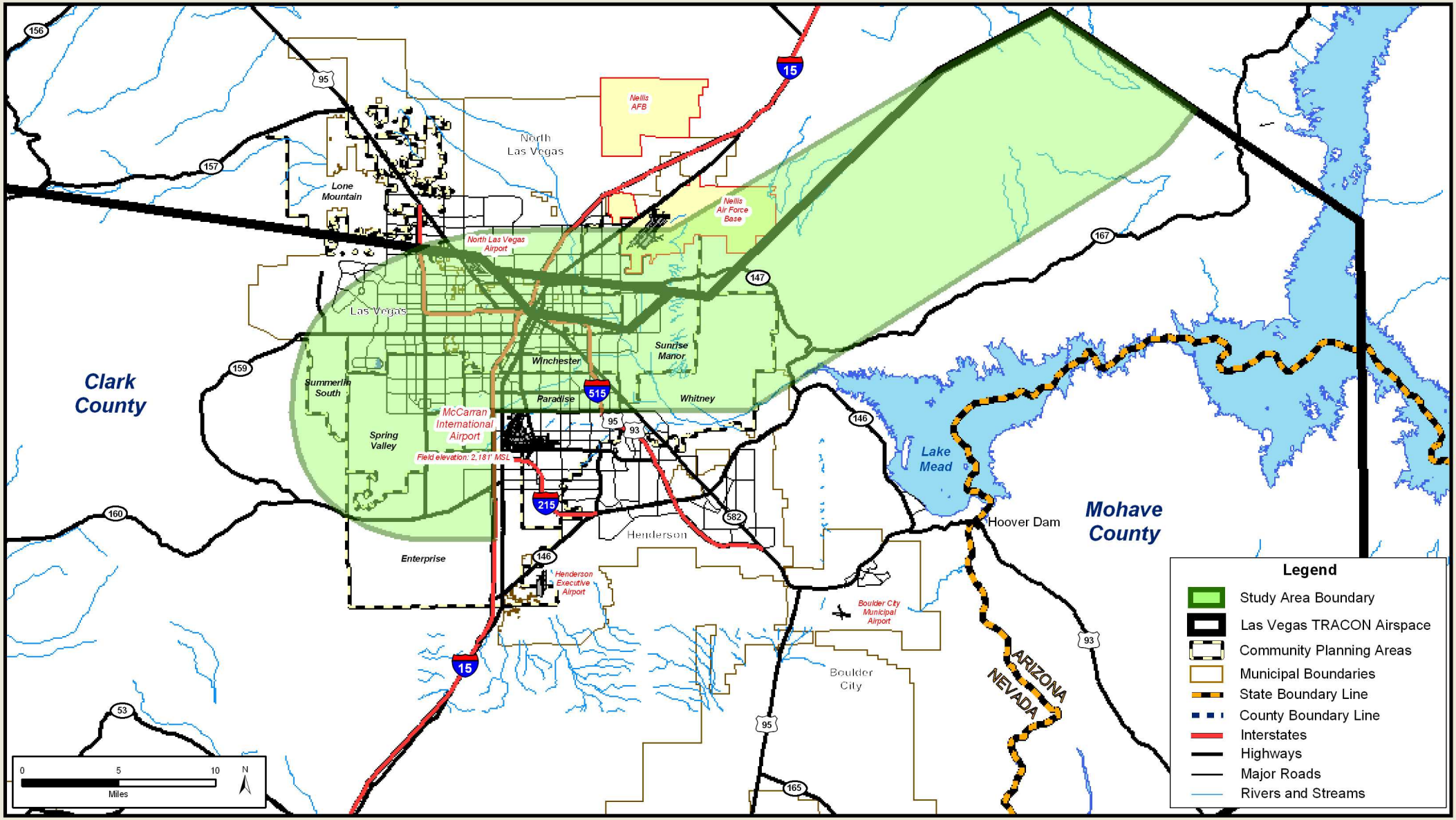
Exhibit 3 : Study Area (or Area of Potential Affect)



DRAFT

cc: Charlie Lieber

U.S. Department
of Transportation
**Federal Aviation
Administration**

Western Terminal Operations

15000 Aviation Boulevard
Lawndale, CA 90261

OCT 0 6 2005

Robert D. Williams
Field Supervisor
Nevada Fish and Wild Office
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
1340 Financial Blvd., Suite 234
Reno, Nevada 89502

Dear Mr. Williams:

Thank you for your response to our request for the identification of federally-listed, proposed, and candidate species known to occur within the defined Area of Potential Effect (Study Area) for the Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for a proposed modification to the Four Corner-Post Plan at McCarran International Airport, Las Vegas, Nevada (LAS). Your response, dated October 4, 2005, indicated that there are no listed, proposed, or candidate species that occur in the Study Area for the Proposed Action. However, this conflicts with species information we received from the Nevada Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Nevada Natural Heritage Program (NNHP).

In response to our request, the NNHP provided Geographic Information System (GIS) data that indicated the state-listed threatened, at-risk, sensitive, protected, and watch-list species with known habitats located within the Study Area for the Proposed Action. The GIS data provided by NNHP did not directly specify the status of each species; instead, to obtain that information, we were directed to the species lists on the NNHP web site. Upon further investigation of the species lists on the NNHP web site, it was determined that one species identified by the NNHP as occurring within the Study Area for the Proposed Action, the Desert Tortoise, is a federally-listed threatened species. The source of this information is the Nevada Natural Heritage Program's (NNHP) list of Federal Threatened Species in Nevada, dated October 20, 2003, found on-line at http://heritage.nv.gov/threatnd.htm/.

We ask that you provide further clarification about the status of the Desert Tortoise. Thank you for your assistance with this matter. If you have questions or require further information, please contact Kathryn Higgins, Environmental Specialist, at 310-725-6597.

Sincerely,

John Clancy
Area Director, Western Terminal Operations