

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement;
Desha County, Arkansas and Bolivar
County, Mississippi**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), DOT.

ACTION: Notice of intent.

SUMMARY: The FHWA is issuing this notice to advise the public that an environmental impact statement will be prepared for a proposed location of I-69 from US 65 in Desha County, Arkansas to State Highway 1 in Bolivar County, Mississippi, including a crossing of the Mississippi River.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Mr. Randal Looney, Environmental Specialist, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Federal Office Building, 700 West Capitol Avenue, Room 3130 Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-3298, Telephone: (501) 324-6430; Mr. Bill Richardson, Asst. Division Head, Environmental Division, Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department (AHTD), 10324 Interstate 30, Little Rock, Arkansas 72201-2398, Telephone: (501) 569-2379; or Mr. Claiborne Barnwell, Environmental Division Engineer, Office of Intermodal Planning, Mississippi Department of Transportation (MDOT), 401 North West Street, Jackson, Mississippi 39215-1850, Telephone: (601) 359-7920.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The FHWA, in cooperation with the Arkansas Highway and Transportation Department and the Mississippi Department of Transportation will prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) on a proposal to build a section of independent utility (SIU) for the proposed Interstate 69. The new facility would include a new roadway and bridge crossing of the Mississippi River connecting U.S. Highway 65 in Arkansas with Route 1 in Mississippi. Project distance is approximately 25 miles. Information developed by a previous EIS for the location of the Great River Bridge and other preliminary documents pertaining to the I-69 corridor will be used in this study.

Alternatives under consideration include: (1) The no build and (2) constructing a four-lane, limited access highway within the limits described above, on various alignment alternatives.

A scoping process has been initiated that involves all appropriate federal and state agencies and Native American Tribes. This will continue throughout the study as an ongoing process. A

formal scoping meeting will be held for the project. A public information effort will be initiated in December, 2000, to include those agencies, local agencies, and private organizations and citizens who have previously expressed, or are known to have, interest in this proposal. This will include all coordination required under Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act. Public informational meetings will be held in the study area to engage the regional community in the decision-making process and to obtain public input. In addition, public hearings will be held to present information developed by the environmental studies and to obtain comments and recommendations from the public. Public notice will be given concerning the time and place of informational meetings and public hearings. The Draft EIS will be made available for public and agency review and comment prior to the public hearings.

To ensure that the full range of issues related to this proposed action are addressed and all significant issues identified, comments and suggestions are invited from all interested parties. Comments or questions concerning this proposed action and EIS should be directed to the FHWA, or AHTD, or MDOT at the addresses provided above.

(Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance Program Number 20.205, Highway Research, Planning and Construction. The regulations implementing Executive Order 12372 regarding intergovernmental consultation on Federal programs and activities apply to this program)

Issued on: December 11, 2000.

Gary A. DalPorto,

Planning and Research Engineer, Federal Highway Administration, Little Rock, Arkansas.

[FR Doc. 00-32206 Filed 12-18-00; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 4910-22-M

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**Federal Highway Administration****Environmental Impact Statement:
Loudoun, Fauquier, Fairfax, Prince
William, and Stafford Counties, VA**

AGENCY: Federal Highway Administration, DOT.

ACTION: Notice of Intent.

SUMMARY: The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) is issuing this notice to advise the public of its intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement in cooperation with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) for potential transportation improvements in the western portion of

Northern Virginia, between Route 7 in Loudoun County and Interstate 95 in Stafford County, to address growing regional transportation needs.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Edward Sundra, Senior Environmental Specialist and Acting Planning and Environmental Team Manager, Federal Highway Administration, Post Office Box 10249, Richmond, Virginia 23240-0249, Telephone 804-775-3338.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In 1995, the Western Transportation Corridor (WTC) Major Investment Study (MIS) was initiated in accordance with 23 CFR 450.318 to develop and document a purpose and need for transportation improvements in the western portion of Northern Virginia and to identify the modal type(s) and general corridor for those transportation improvements. It was intended that the regional government would use the results of the WTC MIS for purposes of long range transportation planning. In December of 1997, that WTC MIS was completed which resulted in the identification for detailed study of a transportation system management/travel demand management alternative, a links alternative, and new facility alternatives. The WTC MIS was reopened in 1998 for additional coordination, and a Coordination Report was issued by VDOT in October of 1998. In developing the WTC MIS, VDOT studied and developed information on a variety of issues including, but not limited to, the need for transportation improvements, identification and screening of a broad range of alternatives, traffic, land use, natural resources, historic and archaeological resources, parklands, air quality, noise, hazardous materials, and cost. Additional information on the WTC MIS conducted for this project and its outcomes can be found at <http://www.vdot.state.va.us/proj/fred/wtcx.html>.

With this notice of intent, FHWA and VDOT are initiating the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process for the WTC to study potential transportation improvements in the western portion of Northern Virginia between Route 7 in Loudoun County and Interstate 95 in Stafford County, just north of the City of Fredericksburg, to accommodate anticipated growth in population and employment and address increasing travel demand and regional access needs.

As part of the NEPA process, the WTC MIS purpose and need will be revisited and revised as necessary to account for any changes in regional needs or goals.