



Vice Chair Debbie Lesko
Board of Supervisors
District 4

301 W. Jefferson St., 10th Floor
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

March 30, 2026
Chairman Patrick Fuchs
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Contact:

P: 602.506-7642
www.Maricopa.gov/ContactLesko

Subject: Proposed BNSF Railway Intermodal Facility in Wittmann, Arizona

Dear Chairman Fuchs,

I am writing to you as the Maricopa County Supervisor representing District 4, located in the western areas of metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona. As you may know, last November, the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors unanimously voted against a comprehensive plan amendment related to a proposed large-scale expansion of BNSF's operations in Wittman, Arizona. The Board's decision was based on inconsistency with the County's Comprehensive Plan, including concerns related to transportation infrastructure capacity and environmental impacts. The denial reflects significant policy concerns regarding the scale and impacts of the proposed use.

The proposed amendment was found to be inconsistent with the County's Comprehensive Plan, primarily due to inadequate transportation infrastructure. The project is estimated to generate approximately 22,000 daily vehicle trips on and off U.S. Highway 60, placing additional strain on an already stressed system with no identified path forward for capacity improvements within the next five years. No funded or planned infrastructure projects were identified to address existing deficiencies or future demand.

Additionally, environmental issues also contributed to the failed measure. These included impacts from diesel truck emissions, as well as concerns related to water and wastewater infrastructure needed to support the project.

Despite this action, BNSF Railway has begun construction work on an intermodal facility in Wittman. According to a statement provided to Maricopa County, the facility will occupy 350 acres of BNSF's 4,320-acre property. It is one component of the larger Logistics Park Phoenix project, which could later include a logistics center, warehouse facilities, and distribution infrastructure.

As the County Supervisor in which this BNSF expansion is happening, I am writing to request information regarding federal permitting, approval, and environmental review requirements. When I recently met with BNSF officials, they stated that no federal approval was needed to construct an intermodal facility, as it falls under federal preemption rights outlined under the authority of the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and the Interstate Commerce Commission Termination Act.



As a matter of due diligence from a county perspective and on behalf of the 6,150 constituents in opposition who have contacted me, I am requesting information to confirm or answer the following questions related to BNSF's construction of its intermodal facility in Wittmann:

1. Has BNSF contacted the STB for project coordination?
2. Does BNSF require STB approval or coordination for construction of an intermodal facility?
 - a. Please provide federal permits and approvals required for the project, along with their status.
3. Does BNSF require National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) approval for construction of an intermodal facility?
 - a. Is federal environmental approval required?
4. Are there federal safety certifications or operational approvals BNSF needs to acquire?
5. If the STB determines that BNSF has the authority to construct its intermodal facility – would the STB provide a declaratory statement that the scope of BNSF's work has been reviewed and approved?

As the local government authority for the region where this infrastructure project is being developed, Maricopa County is committed to ensuring that all necessary environmental protections are in place and that federal, state, and local regulatory processes are properly coordinated. We appreciate STB's attention to this inquiry and look forward to establishing a productive working relationship with your agency on this matter.

For more information, or to provide a response, please contact my Chief of Staff, Keith Forte, at keith.forte@maricopa.gov or 602-506-5774.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "D Lesko". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Vice-Chair Debbie Lesko
Maricopa County - District 4
301 West Jefferson Street
Phoenix, Arizona 85003

cc:

U. S. House of Representatives – Transportation and Infrastructure Committee
Arizona Department of Transportation
Maricopa County Board of Supervisors
BNSF Railway Company