

RAÚL M. GRIJALVA
7TH DISTRICT OF ARIZONA

COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
Subcommittee on Water and Power
Subcommittee on Parks, Forests and
Public Lands – *Ranking Member*

COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND THE WORKFORCE
Subcommittee on Early Childhood,
Elementary and Secondary Education
Subcommittee on Higher Education and
Workforce Training

CONGRESSIONAL PROGRESSIVE CAUCUS,
Co-Chair



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0307

June 13, 2011

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The Honorable Victor M. Mendez
Administrator
Federal Highway Administration
The Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave., S.E.
Washington, DC 20590-0898

Dear Administrator Mendez:

I strongly support the Tohono O'odham Nation's application for \$2,800,000 in FY2011 Public Lands Highway Discretionary Program funds to construct a new bridge over the Artesia Wash in Sells, the capital and employment and service center of the Nation's Reservation.

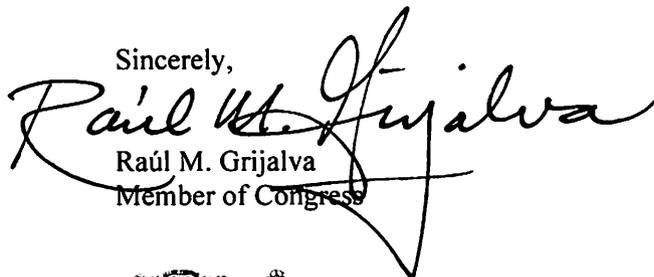
The Nation occupies approximately 4500 square miles in southern Arizona, shares 75 miles of international border with Mexico, and makes up about 20% of my district. The Nation faces extraordinary challenges to provide safe and secure infrastructure. Federal funds are necessary to construct a bridge over the Artesia Wash and the Nation's grant application is worthy of your support.

Constructing a new bridge over the Artesia Wash on Main Street (IRR 101) is a public safety imperative for residents in Sells and in nearby communities, including Artesia and Little Tucson. Main Street is a heavily traveled artery that connects the Town's residents and community members who often travel to the Town from around the vast expanses of the Reservation. The roadway dips down into the Artesia Wash, which is dry several months of the year. However, flash floods in November through January, April and May, and July through September can fill the roadway to a depth of 6 feet or higher in a matter of seconds.

When Main Street floods over 1000 tribal members living in Artesia and the communities east and south of Sells are cut off from jobs, schools, hospitals, food stores and other retail and commercial establishments, in addition to law enforcement and emergency vehicles. Four people died in the last six years when the road suddenly turned into a rushing river of water. The Nation is prepared to obligate \$200,000 for the Design Concept Report phase for the proposed bridge, but cannot complete the bridge without additional federal support.

I urge you to support the Tohono O'odham Nation's application for Public Lands Highway Discretionary funds to complete the bridge, which is vital to the safety and economic vitality of the Tohono O'odham people. I thank you in advance for your consideration of the Nation's application, and welcome you to contact me directly with any questions you may have.

Sincerely,


Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress