

C O P Y

San Diego, California
September 16, 1914.

Honorable Board of Supervisors,
Imperial County,
El Centro, California.

Gentlemen:

In the matter of the lumber for the planking of the sand dunes for the direct road El Centro to Yuma, will say that San Diego will furnish same on demand of your road committee. The understanding is that the temporary road ~~to~~ El Centro to Yuma via the sand dunes will be open to traffic in December, 1914.

It is San Diego's desire to have good roads constructed everywhere, but particularly that portion of the Southern National Highway, El Centro to Yuma, for we are already assured of a State Highway, San Diego to El Centro.

In this connection, will say that I have spend considerable money and time the last few months, with considerable success, in attempting to create a sentiment in favor of an appropriation by the State Legislature this winter to be used in the continuation of the State Highway, a concrete road from El Centro to Yuma. The California Highway Commission is constructing a State Highway to the Oregon line, and my contention is that Southern California has a perfect right to demand and should have a concrete Highway to the Arizona line, and at the earliest possible moment.

Your County Surveyor, Mr. Perry, is now surveying the direct route El Centro to Yuma. I request that you have him furnish me at the earliest possible date a profile and alignment of the road; also his estimate of the cost per mile to construct a State Highway according to plans and specifications for 15-ft roadway with concrete base, as at present constructed by the California Highway Commission. The Board of Control of the State of California will next month make up the budget which they will recommend to the Legislature covering the amount of appropriations for the coming session, as recommended by the administration. I am very desirous of having Mr. Perry's report in promptly, so that same may be presented to the Board of Control this coming month. And it may be advisable that a strong committee from Southern California appear before the Board of Control and present our claims. If we are successful, and get the administration behind us, there is every reason to believe that we will win the desired appropriation.

Our greatest argument is that the Southern National Highway is the only route open the year round across the continent, and the most direct as well. We must have the direct road El Centro to Yuma open and in good, passable condition before the Legislature meets.

Imperial County has a right to demand that the National Highway pass thru the center of Imperial Valley, and is entitled to this road. In my opinion, if a natural highway is built west from Yuma via Glamis and Mammoth Wash, it will not serve the best interests of Imperial Valley, for it is many miles shorter to continue the construction into Southern California of a natural highway parallel to the Southern Pacific Railway, and there is also danger thereby of Imperial Valley being sidetracked.

You can rest assured that San Diego stands for the construction of, and will assist in, building the following roads, which eventually must be state highways, with concrete base.

- 1st. A direct road El Centro to Yuma.
- 2nd. A direct road Riverside to Brawley and El Centro via San Felipe pass.
- 3rd. A direct road Brawley to Pala Verde Valley and Needles.

The shortest road to Imperial Valley from Southern California and Riverside is via the San Felipe Pass, and it eliminates fully 75 miles of desert travel. Riverside County is now constructing a concrete road Riverside to Perris, which is part of highway No. 2, mentioned above.

San Diego County is now surveying the highway down San Felipe Valley toward Brawley and the Imperial County line, and there is no question in my mind but what this road will be built and at an early date.

I ask your Honorable Body to include in the budget for this coming year an appropriation to put in good, passable condition both the El Centro-Yuma and the Brawley-San Felipe roads. You can rest assured that San Diego County will also do its part in contributing to the expense of a road from Brawley to Pala Verde Valley, and connecting with the Old Trails Association highway at Needles. When this system of roads is completed, it is then possible to divert into Imperial County and San Diego all traffic over all transcontinental highways thru the states of Arizona and New Mexico.

Hoping that you will give this matter your earnest attention and favorable action,

Very sincerely yours,

(Signed) EdL Fletcher
President

F-S

February
Twenty-seven
1922

Board of Supervisors,
Imperial County,
El Centro, Calif.

Gentlemen:

Surveys are now being made and the route determined for the road from Mecca to Blythe, with chances in favor of the northern route. Imperial Valley is vitally interested in having the southern route built, as it will mean the construction of 35 miles at least between Niland and Blythe.

My suggestion is that Imperial County Supervisors pass resolutions urging the adoption of the southern route and agree to cooperate with the California Highway Commission in connecting the Palo Verde Valley and Imperial County. There is no question but what there is going to be tremendous travel from northern Arizona and Phoenix via Blythe, and a lot of trans-continental travel will come into Imperial Valley and San Diego. It is the shortest distance over the Old Trails route and the ocean. 22,000 machines went thru Blythe, and most of them into Los Angeles last year, across the Blythe ferry.

I urge that you pass resolutions favoring the southern route, and send same both to the California Highway Commission, and the Governor, with no publicity in the Imperial Valley papers, promising your hearty cooperation and showing them the necessity of connecting the two valleys.

The above is simply a suggestion.

Yours sincerely,

EF:KLM

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Fort Yuma Indian School, California
Yuma, Arizona. July twenty-sixth

1 9 2 2

The Board of Supervisors,
Imperial County,
El Centro, California.

Gentlemen:--

I am enclosing herewith a circular letter from the Commissioner of Indian Affairs, also one from the Comptroller General to the Secretary of Agriculture, which are explanatory to the use of funds, etc, in connection with road work on Indian Reservations.

The right-of-way for the highway across this reservation has been approved, but there may be some changes necessary to meet the approval of the State Highway Commission and I assure you that if you will take this up with the engineering department and ascertain what changes, if any, are necessary, I will do all I can to assist in having the changes approved.

I hope action will not be delayed and that the pavement may be completed this winter ten miles from the State line which will cross the reservation and which is and has been the roughest part of the main highway from this point to the State line on the north.

Hoping nothing will cause delay in this work which means so much to the Valley and to the State, I am

Respectfully,

Loson L. Odle
Superintendent.

cc- Col. Ed Fletcher, San Diego,
Indian Office.
Associated Chamber of Commerce, El Centro, Calif.

LLO-CF

DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Circular No. 1801, OFFICE OF INDIAN AFFAIRS . --- WASHINGTON

July 19, 1922.

Cooperative road work.

To Superintendents:

Section 3 of the Federal Highway Act of November 9, 1921, provides in part as follows:

"The Secretary of Agriculture is authorized to cooperate with the state highway departments, and with the Department of the Interior in the construction of public highways within Indian reservations, and to pay the amount assumed therefor from the funds allotted or apportioned under this act to the state wherein the reservation is located."

In a decision dated May 27, 1922, interpreting the above provision, the Comptroller General decided, in effect, that, should the state agree, and if it complies with the other provisions of the act, the entire cost of that portion of any public highway across an Indian reservation may be paid from the funds apportioned under the act to the State within which the reservation is located; but that the state must make provision for the upkeep and repair thereof as in other cases.

Under Section 11 of the Act, except in states having over 5% of unappropriated public lands, where the percentage of federal aid is correspondingly increased, the proportion of such aid is limited to 50% of the total cost of the project, the other 50% to be paid by the state. Under the Comptroller General's decision, this limitation does not apply to public highways within Indian reservations, as set forth above. A copy of the decision is attached hereto, with copy of letter dated June 13th, 1922, from the Chief of the Bureau of Public Roads relative thereto.

The "states 7% system" is provided for by Section 6 of the act, as follows:- "Before any projects are approved, in any state, such state, through its state highway department, shall select or designate a system of highways not to exceed 7 per centum of the total highway mileage of such state as shows by the records of the state highway department at the time of the passage of this Act. Upon this system all Federal-aid apportionments shall be expended."

The law requires that the state must take the initiative by submitting a "project statement" setting forth the proposed construction, and upon approval thereof the state shall furnish plans, specifications, and estimates. Informal application has been made to this office for government aid from funds at its disposal for the construction of public highways across various Indian reservations, which owing to lack of funds, have been held up pending the Comptroller General's decision. If any such cases exist on your reservation, please inform the interested local people that they should take the matter up with the State highway department as outlined in Mr. McDonald's letter, furnishing this office with a copy of your letter.

Congress sometimes makes a specific appropriation for a certain road across or within an Indian reservation; also, in some cases tribal funds authorized by Congress for general purposes may be available for part of the cost of a road across the reservation. In such cases it is manifestly proper to reduce accordingly the amount of government aid under the Federal Highway Act. With regard to tribal funds authorized by Congress, such funds are intended primarily for the support and civilization of the Indians and they will be available for road work only to the extent that their use for this purpose will not handicap the regular activities chargeable thereto. The state's application or project statement should show the facts on this point. In order that they may do so the Superintendent should give the necessary information in transmitting the application for right-of-way to this Office.

Under our regulations each application for a right-of-way across Indian lands must be accompanied by map of definite location, in duplicate, drawn on tracing linen. If each application is also accompanied by two blue-print copies of map they will be returned with Departmental approval stamped thereon, if this action is taken. The local or State highway authorities will then have one copy for their files and the other copy can be sent to the Bureau of Public Roads with the project statement. This Office will cooperate by recommending that rights-of-way be granted without assessment of damages whenever the benefits are estimated as equaling or exceeding the damages, and the superintendent, after notice of approval, should furnish the State highway department with a letter showing the amount of damages, paid, if any.

In some cases, it may be practicable to extend additional cooperation (besides granting the right-of-way) in the construction of public highways within Indian Reservations. This cooperation may take various forms, such as assisting in securing an adequate supply of Indian labor at the usual rates; furnishing road and bridge building materials (gravels, rock, lumber etc) when available on the reservation; or the loan of Indian Service equipment, if such there be. In each such case, the Superintendent should reach an agreement with the State Highway department about the matter and then make appropriate recommendation to this office.

If in any case the benefit to the Indians will justify, and should funds be available therefor, arrangements may be made with the State Highway department whereby this Service will cooperate in the upkeep and repair of a Federal aid project across an Indian reservation by furnishing labor and available material therefor and in such other ways as may be practicable in each particular case.

Please acknowledge receipt hereof, with advice of the action taken, if any.

CHAS. H. BURKE
Commissioner.

c o p y
Inclasure
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
Washington

June 13, 1922

In reply please refer to File No. b-1.

Mr. Charles H. Burke, Commission of Indian Affairs,
Department of the Interior, Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

On June 5, Mr. T. B. Boone of your office discussed, informally with Messrs. Boykin and O'Leary of this Bureau the recent decision of the Comptroller General of the United States in which he held that under the provisions of Section 3 (second paragraph) of the Federal Highway Act of November 9, 1921, the Secretary of Agriculture may, in his discretion and if so requested by the State Highway Department, pay the whole of any part of the cost of constructing road projects within Indian Reservations. This decision was rendered by the Comptroller General on May 27, supplementing previous decision of April 10, 1922.

This Bureau does not consider it necessary that any change be made in the existing rules and regulations in order to carry out such cooperation as may be undertaken with State Highway Departments and with the Department of the Interior in the construction of highways within Indian Reservations. Each project involving a road within an Indian Reservation will have to be submitted by the State Highway Department and be subject to the same procedure and the same requirements as other Federal Aid projects, except that the State Highway Department, may, if it wishes, request that the whole or any part of the cost of such project be paid out of the Federal aid funds apportioned to the State, and, in that event, the Secretary of Agriculture, in his discretion, may approve the payment of the portion of the cost of the project so requested out of the Federal aid funds apportioned to the State. It is to be understood, however, that this is discretionary with State Highway Departments as to whether participation to a greater extent than that permissible on Federal aid projects located outside Indian Reservations will be requested, and that when such request is made it is discretionary with the Secretary of Agriculture as to whether or not he will approve same. It may frequently be that a State will not wish to pay the whole cost of constructing a road within an Indian Reservation out of its Federal aid apportionment, but would prefer to have Federal participation on such projects to the same extent and on the same basis as on other projects in the State.

If Congress has made a specific appropriation from tribal funds for any particular road across an Indian Reservation, or should tribal funds authorized by Congress for general purposes be available therefor, such funds should be used and the participation necessary from State funds or from the State's Federal aid apportionment reduced to the extent of such specific appropriation or authorization from tribal funds. For each project within an Indian Reservation there should be furnished to the State Highway Department to accompany the project statement and to become a part of the record an appropriate statement from the Indian office that the improvement of the proposed project meets with its approval and the extent and kind of cooperation, if any, available from the Department of the Interior. It may be that the Interior Department will always be in position to cooperate in so far as providing rights-of way is concerned, and possibly to the extent of materials available

within the Reservation. As rights-of-way, we are not permitted to pay any part of the costs thereof, but this Department requires that an adequate right-of-way be furnished. We, therefore, would like to have accompany the project statement when submitted by the State, to become a part of the record on each project, a copy of the application for right of way, with a blue print and approval of the Secretary of the Interior. #It will be necessary also, in line with the Comptroller's decision of April 10, and the provisions of Section 6 of the Federal Highway Act, that any road within an Indian Reservation proposed for improvement must be on the State's 7 per cent system of Federal-aid highways.

The Federal Highway Act requires that States provide for and actually maintain in a manner satisfactory to the Secretary of Agriculture all roads constructed with Federal aid. The State Highway Departments, therefore, will be charged by this Department with responsibility for the maintenance and upkeep of any roads which may be constructed with Federal aid funds within Indian Reservations.

A copy of the Comptroller General's decision has been forwarded to each of the District Engineers of this Bureau, and will reach the several State Highway Departments through that channel.

I return herewith the proposed draft of instructions to be issued by your office to the Superintendents of Indian Reservations, which was left with Mr. Boykin by Mr. Boone.

Very truly yours,

THOS. H. MAC DONALD
Chief of Bureau

Enclosures
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December
Twenty-two
1922

Board of Supervisors,
Imperial County,
El Centro, California.

Gentlemen:

There are strong indications, in fact definite statements made by the most prominent people of Los Angeles who are determined to kill the Holtville-Yuma route, that they will use their influence to have the California Highway Commission build between Mecca and Blythe, diverting all travel from Imperial Valley. This is unfortunate but true.

We are hoping that the California Highway Commission will let a contract and get the work done of paving to the west end of the plank road before the present commission goes out of existence. The plank road is serving the purpose, and will for years to come.

It is a serious question whether we can get the legislature to appropriate any money this next season to build between Holtville and Yuma. If worst comes to worst, can the Board of Supervisors of Imperial County put over a bond issue to complete the gap from Yuma to the westerly end of the plank road. The highway is financed, with a gravel macadam road or paved highway from Phoenix to Yuma. It is up to us to fill that gap. Machines are coming in now at the rate of 75 to 100 a day via Yuma.

This letter is not written for publication but just to get an expression from you people. San Diego is ready to raise some of the money by private subscription if it has to in order to complete the gap.

Yours very truly,

EF:KLM

Ed Fletcher Papers

1870-1955

MSS.81

Box: 13 Folder: 10

**General Correspondence - Imperial
County Board of Supervisors, California**



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