BACKGROUND

I-11 is intended to be a new high-capacity, multimodal transportation facility connecting the metropolitan areas of Las Vegas and Phoenix. If extended north of Las Vegas and south of Phoenix, this facility has the potential to become a major north-south transcontinental corridor through the intermountain west, as well as mitigate congestion on Interstate 10 between the Tucson and Phoenix metropolitan areas. The corridor is proposed to include an upgraded highway facility, but could be paired with rail and other major infrastructure components—such as energy and telecommunications—to serve the nation’s needs from Mexico to Canada.

The concept of an access controlled, high-capacity transportation facility connecting Phoenix and Las Vegas (with connections further north and south) has been around for decades, initiating with the CANAMEX corridor discussions in 1991. An approach for comprehensive corridor implementation was furthered by the Maricopa Association of Governments as a bypass route around the western and southern edges of metropolitan Phoenix, and further conceptualized through statewide planning efforts by ADOT to extend outside the state of Arizona. Nevada has been an equal partner with Arizona since the early 1990s, planning for a regional corridor with improved access between Las Vegas and Phoenix and a potential northern extension to Reno – creating a better connected Intermountain West with greater economic opportunities. Both states have already implemented various planning, design and construction projects for potential corridor components, with the most notable being the completion of the Hoover Dam Bypass and Mike O’Callaghan – Pat Tillman Memorial Bridge.

Developing a new north-south trade corridor through Nevada and Arizona could supplement the existing system and relieve freight congestion on I-5, one of only two (including I-15) continuous north-south Mexico-to-Canada interstate routes west of Texas. The CANAMEX corridor, established under the North American Free Trade Agreement, has been designated as such a parallel route, spanning the Western United States between Mexico and Canada through the states of Arizona, Nevada, Utah, Idaho and Montana. However, the CANAMEX corridor is composed of a myriad of existing Interstate corridors and state highways, and is not a continuous route due to a gap in the designation between I-10 and US 93. Implementation of the I-11 corridor can fill this gap – allowing significant commerce, tourism and international trade opportunities across the Western United States.

For study purposes, the Corridor is divided into five segments: three high priority segments between (and including) the Las Vegas and Phoenix metropolitan areas, and two high-level visioning segments for possible future extensions from Las Vegas to Canada, and from Phoenix to Mexico.
RECOMMENDED POSITION STATEMENT

The Tucson Utility Contractors Association (TUCA) supports the I-11 concept including the Phoenix to Mexico segment to immediately address increased freight and an alternative route to relieve congestion on I-10. This plan will enhance connectivity to major economic sectors of the State of Arizona. TUCA would like to emphasize its support in addressing the linkage south of Phoenix to acknowledge the freight coming from Mexico through Tucson. The need to further improve freight movements at the international border Northbound is important to the economic development opportunities, and opens Southern Arizona to the benefits of global commerce and logistics.