

Attachment F

Responses to Public Hearing Comments on the Bigelow Gulch Road/Forker Road
Urban Connector Revised Environmental Assessment

Attachment F: Comments and Responses to November 26, 2007 Public Hearing for the Revised Environmental Assessment

Information in this attachment includes a summary of the public hearing and Table F-1, Responses to Public Hearing comments.

November 26, 2007 Public Hearing

Spokane County held a public hearing on November 26, 2007, to inform the public of the Bigelow Gulch Road/Forker Road Urban Connector proposal and to solicit public input on the Revised Environmental Assessment. Mike Dempsey, Spokane County Hearing Examiner presided at the public hearing.

The public hearing was held between 4:40 and 7:30 p.m. at the Spokane Christian Center located at 8909 E. Bigelow Gulch Road. The public hearing was held whereby a Hearing Examiner took oral public testimony recorded by a certified Court Reporter and accepted written comments.

The public hearing was conducted by Spokane Hearing Examiner, Mike Dempsey. Eighteen members of the public or representatives of local businesses or organizations provided oral testimony. There were a range of comments including, comments in support and opposition to the project and numerous requests were made for a time extension. In general, the oral comments received at the November 26th public hearing touched on one or more the following concerns or issues:

- Historic preservation and 4(f) evaluation regarding the Paulson property;
- Impacts to the Millwood township;
- Impacts to the Orchard Prairie School;
- Impacts of the North-South freeway;
- Impacts to school busing and cost of transporting students;
- Proposed speed limit of 45 m.p.h. too high;
- Pedestrian safety not sufficient;

- Accuracy of the traffic volume projections;
- Need for middle turn lanes between Havana and Freya;
- Need for different approach to moving goods and people because of high oil prices and global warming;
- Use of public transportation and rail to move goods;
- Traffic volume on Sullivan Road;
- Accidents and safety;
- Large size of the Revised EA and availability of information;
- Noise impacts, control of Jake brakes, and lack of noise mitigation measures;
- Impact to wells, water quality, groundwater and cost of water;
- Inadequate public involvement;
- Access by residents;
- Alternative route via Stoneman Road;
- Need a project that will improve traffic movement for businesses;
- Need for a bicycle trail;
- Potential deer kill;
- Connector will bring urban sprawl;
- Impact and control of noxious weeds and litter; and
- Mail delivery.

Public Hearing Comments and Responses

In Attachment F, Table F-1 presents excerpts from the November 27, 2007 public hearing. A total of 77 comments were presented at the hearing. The table includes a code number by topic (see Table E-1 above), an assigned comment number, followed by the response to the comment. A paper copy of the public hearing transcript is available for public review at the Spokane County Public Works' office, and is also available on the CD of the FONSI and in PDF format on the Spokane County website at <http://www.spokanecounty.org/engineer/>

Table F-1. Responses to Public Hearing Comments on the Bigelow Gulch Road/Forker Road Urban Connector Revised Environmental Assessment

Action Code	Letter Number	Comment Number	Comment	Response
01.3	27	1	<p>ELIZABETH MOSEY: My name's Elizabeth Mosey and I represent the James W. Weston and Helen M. Weston living trust. And I'm here to speak in opposition to the proposed action of the Bigelow expansion to the extent the county is shifting the right-of-way south to avoid the Paulson farmstead and inevitably taking all of the additional right-of-way that will be needed from the trust property.</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
45.9	27	2	<p>ELIZABETH MOSEY: The trust property is located at the intersection of Bigelow Gulch Road and Jensen Road. It borders Bigelow -- Bigelow borders it to the north and Jensen to the east. The property is presently used for hay production and is located directly south of the Karl Paulson farmstead. The Paulson farmstead is eligible for the National Historic Registry; however, it has not yet been registered and there is no evidence in the record of the owner's intent to register the property. The Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation in its analysis under Section 106, National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, has determined that there is no adverse effect from the expansion of Bigelow Gulch onto the farmstead property. This was done by letter dated April 15th, 2004. The County and its consultant Jones and Stokes have acknowledged that there is no adverse effect on the farmstead property in the original environmental assessment from January of 2006.</p> <p>The proposed action set forth in the revised environmental assessment is to narrow the right-of-way to 80 feet from 120 feet for .14 miles from just west of</p>	<p>Comments noted. Please see response to letter 21, comment 4.</p>

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85.0	27	3	<p>Jensen Road to east of Argonne Road and shifts the right-of-way south to totally avoid the farmstead. The result of this change of the right-of-way is taking all of the additional right-of-way that will be needed from the trust property and the other properties located on the south portion of Bigelow, while the properties bordering Bigelow to the north will not have any additional right-of-way taken from their property.</p> <p>ELIZABETH MOSEY: The Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 applies to historical sites, and it is under this statute that the County is proposing to avoid the farmstead. It's eligible to be considered as a 4(f) property because it is eligible for the historic registry even though it has not yet been recognized or added to the register.</p> <p>The previous version of 4(f) used to require the avoidance of historical sites unless there was no other feasible or prudent alternative, and this has been amended in August of 2005, which makes the avoidance requirement inapplicable when there's only a de minimis impact on a historical site. This is the first substantive amendment to the Act since 1966. And in the Federal Highway Administration memorandum dated December 13th, 2005, it states that the avoidance analysis is not required when there's only a de minimis impact. This is important because the additional cost and delay of avoiding historical sites when there's little public benefit had to be recognized because there is such broad application of the 4(f) requirements.</p> <p>In a public hearing prior to adoption of the amendment, the Executive Director of AASHTO commented on a situation in Kentucky where the State was required to comply with 4(f), had to avoid a historical property. The historical property was located on one of the roadway</p>	Please see response to comment 21-7

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			and the owner of that property also owned property on the other side. They re-aligned the roadway to avoid the historical property taking the home located that wasn't historical. The owner demolished the historical residence moving the non-historical residence to where the historical residence had previously been located completely eliminating the public benefit that was aimed from the 4(f) avoidance.	
			And it's these kinds of situations that this exception for a de minimis impact is aimed at resolving. And the situation here with the Paulson farmstead is very similar. It's already been recognized by the State Department of Archeology and Historic Preservation that there will be no impact if a portion of the farmstead land is used in the right-of-way.	
			The statutory requirements for making a de minimis finding have for the most part already been satisfied as there's already been a letter with a "no adverse effect" finding. There's been consultation with both the County and Jones and Stokes where they have recognized that there's no adverse impact by using the farmstead property. The only remaining thing that needs to be done is for the Department of Transportation or the Federal Highway Administration to render a written finding of "No Adverse Impact." And this is what the trust requests the County to seek and the Department of Transportation and Highway Administrations to render, in accordance with the amended 4(f) de minimis requirement.	
45.9	27	4	ELIZABETH MOSEY: The trust as it stands with the proposed action being inequitably impacted by having to give up more property than the properties similarly situated to the north of it and that the avoidance of the 4(f) farmstead is not required by the statute and a de	Please see response to comment 21-7

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03.5	27	5	<p>minimis finding should be rendered and following that finding the right-of-way should be split equally between all the properties.</p> <p>LORNA ST JOHN: While I applaud the department's efforts to make this a more open process than it has been in the past, I must respectfully point out, as I did in a letter to the County Commissioners, that 30 days simply is not enough time to make a meaningful response to the document that was presented to the public.</p> <p>It is the job of the Spokane County Engineering Department to absorb and understand this document. Citizens play catch up. It is written in engineering-ese and other specialized languages that I don't speak, and for these and other obvious reasons, like normal daily life's pushes and pulls and career pressures that interfere with my ability to decipher this document, I ask that we be given more time to study, reflect, and react to the environmental assessment.</p>	Comment noted. Please see response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the comment period.
55.1	27	6	<p>LORNA ST JOHN: This highway directs traffic to two critical bottlenecks. There's been no attempt to discuss the ramifications the highway will have on the Millwood township. The tiny cottage-style town hasn't any room for expansion, and no one has even talked to them about how this super-highway might affect them. Clearly, more cars using this road will be backed up from the six to ten trains per day that stop traffic at Argonne and Euclid.</p> <p>The Millwood spokesman I visited said Argonne is at capacity now. And there is an assumption that there will be funding for a bridge expansion at Trent and Sullivan in the city of Spokane Valley. Their engineer is not convinced that the widening will happen as no funding is on the horizon, and it drops a critical mass of cars to a</p>	See response to comments 19-3 and 1-8

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45.1	27	7	very inadequate merger. LORNA ST JOHN: I'm concerned for the life of our tiny Orchard Prairie School for which I have been just elected a board member. This corridor would be the Death Nell. Highways draw development. I fear urban sprawl and commercial development, neither of which the school can withstand.	Thank you for your comments.
65.0	27	8	LORNA ST JOHN: Your project will also render my childhood home uninhabitable. It's already unpleasant to be outside because of the noise. The expansion will bring the noise level to a dangerous range.	Comments noted.
90.1	27	9	LORNA ST JOHN: Even though your Jones and Stokes didn't find it [my childhood home] of historical significance, it is the oldest home on the prairie and has historical and monetary significance to my family and me.	Comments noted. Please see response to comment 19-6.
03.5	27	10	LORNA ST JOHN: This is just a cursory response to the EA. I request more time for a more formal answer to the County's insistence on an inappropriate scale of the necessary involvement of Bigelow Gulch Road.	Comments noted. Please see response to comment 19-7.
03.5	27	11	DONALD HAMILTON: I think it's very important tonight to make the point that we must have more time to make meaningful comment on this EA. Last time we went through this process with the earlier EA, it was instantly obvious to Commissioner Todd Mulkey that we should be given more time, and he asked was it the purview of the engineers to extend the time. And even though it's the same federally mandated process, time was extended. And that's a matter of record.	Comment noted. Please see response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the comment period.
01.3	27	12	DONALD HAMILTON: I believe the EA for this project as described is insufficient to what this project truly is. I believe that this project is massive in its implication but its process has been piecemeal, continues to be, and I think to the detriment of citizens. I would like to just say	Comments noted.

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01.3	27	13	<p>in particular right here -- I will present my first exhibit to you -- there are a lot of maps and explanations and exhibits in that heavy EA that you see right here. This is massively huge, but it is not terribly enlightening.</p> <p>DONALD HAMILTON: To me, this is a very critical truth that is not addressed in this EA, and that truth is this: This orange line indicates the proposed north/south corridor. This top part of this line shows the part that is soon to be completed. It ends precisely where this Bigelow project, where Bigelow Gulch Road and Francis are. There's no realistic plan right now to complete this part. And once this super-highway, as it seems to be developing -- because we don't have all the date on it yet -- this will be the de facto north/south freeway. No one has been honest enough in meetings like this with me and my community to state that, and I think that is a real flaw.</p>	<p>Excerpts of January 4, 2008 (see Letter 100 comments in Attachment E) e-mail from Jerry Lenzi, WSDOT Regional Administrator to Lorna St. John: "While it is true that the construction efforts for the NSC as currently funded will build an operating facility from the Francis Avenue and Freya Street to the Wandermere vicinity, it is incorrect to assume or imply that the NSC is planned to conclude at Francis/Freya Interchange. This current construction is funded by the Nickel gas tax and through that funding a drivable segment of the NSC, which will begin in the vicinity of Francis/Freya Interchange in the south and extend to the vicinity of Wandermere on the north, will be opened to traffic. This will occur in phases beginning in 2009 and will be completely open in 2011.</p> <p>Concurrent with this effort, there are approximately \$152 million dollars of funding from the Transportation Partnership Account (TPA) and other sources. Through this funding WSDOT is actively pursuing design, right of way, and minor construction efforts for the NSC south of Francis Avenue. This includes actively purchasing needed right of way along the I-90 corridor, where the NSC and I-90 will connect. To date there is approximately \$530 million dollars either already invested or dedicated to be spent on the NSC project from both the Nickel and TPA funds. For this reason we do not concur with your point 1. While there is a considerable amount of work to be done and future funding to be secured, WSDOT is very actively pursuing efforts on the NSC both north and south of the Francis</p>

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02.0	27	14	<p>DONALD HAMILTON: Given that tonight -- that the last meeting, the public open house, the preferred means of communications was lovely poster boards like this. I don't have time to adequately respond to this, but I did think that I would go ahead and create something that seemed to have similar bullet points like the engineers provided.</p> <p>DONALD HAMILTON: The Bigelow Gulch Road Expansion. In the short time available to read and understand the EA, we see that it ensures the north/south freeway will never be completed along the planned route. It destroys the Orchard Prairie community, it dismisses the concerns of local property owners, it kills off the elk herd and other wildlife, it delivers urban sprawl, it thwarts the urban connector plan, defies the WSDOT plan, endangers the children of Orchard Prairie School, wastes federal, state, and county money, uses outdated and inaccurate traffic studies.</p> <p>I mean they are outdated, and they are inaccurate and they, what little there is was done when oil was \$25 a barrel. It turns a long-needed safety improvement into a massive highway project.</p>	<p>Avenue area. In response to your question number 3, I am not aware of any discussions or plans from any governmental agency that would support or confirm your concern that Bigelow Gulch would be considered as US 395 connecting with I-90."</p> <p>Comments noted.</p>
01.3	27	15	<p>DONALD HAMILTON: Frankly, it [Urban Connector Alignment] continues a disingenuous public input process. I hope that we can have another 120 days to truly read and understand this huge document. I think it's ... I would prefer to think that the present county engineering department has made this error for</p>	<p>Comments noted.</p>
03.5	27	16	<p>DONALD HAMILTON: Frankly, it [Urban Connector Alignment] continues a disingenuous public input process. I hope that we can have another 120 days to truly read and understand this huge document. I think it's ... I would prefer to think that the present county engineering department has made this error for</p>	<p>Comment noted. Please see response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the comment period.</p>

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55.0	27	17	<p>my community inadvertently, and I hope that they will correct it and extend the time for us to make these comments. The last time we faced a big EA, it, it took months to understand and to reasonably respond.</p> <p>DONALD HAMILTON: The last point I want to make, and it's just this, we -- the version that we saw in 2006 showed nine paved lanes, including the frontage roads that would be at the end of the driveway where I live. Now there are no frontage roads shown. Now there is just a highway, and it's completely unclear to me how I would go to town. And I don't want to ascribe motives to past or -- past engineers on this, but I just, I just feel that this whole thing is moving too fast, ad hoc, piecemeal, and we, the people of this community and all of the people of the region are ill-served by the process.</p> <p>DONALD HAMILTON: I understand that the comment period is currently opened until the 8th. I hope to have a chance, if it can't be extended, to respond more thoroughly between now and then, but that's it for now, and I thank you for your time.</p>	<p>The frontage road concept was proposed to the neighborhood but due to opposition from the affected residents, the concept was dropped.</p>
03.5	27	18	<p>ROBERT MCMILLAN: I'm here representing the concerns of our school. I have been associated with the school for this is my 34th year. I've seen major changes, minor changes. Not too long ago Mr. Brueggeman, County Engineer, whatever, agreed that the existing Bigelow Gulch Road was the most hazardous road in Spokane County. At that time, we adopted that was known as an Illinois plan for getting our kids to school and back, the state being that no child, regardless of age, should ever place a foot on Bigelow Gulch Road, either walking or crossing.</p> <p>The plan was fantastic. It worked. We got our kids to school safe, except for two accidents which happened</p>	<p>Comment noted. Please see response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the comment period.</p>
45.1	27	19	<p>Thank you for your comments. There should not be any increase in bus route length or time.</p>	

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			on Bigelow Gulch Road. Now they're saying that the new road will create a landfill just east of Palmer Road, and it will create another landfill just east of Weille Road. In both cases, my discussions with the County said, and I explained to them, what you are proposing will increase our bus ride route by will exactly 25 percent. It will increase our children being on the bus exactly 25 percent.	
			Right now, we can basically get these kids to school in 52 minutes. This change will add 15 minutes in the morning and adds 15 in the afternoon. We are extremely fortunate. There have only been two accidents since I've been here involving school kids, and that happened with one of our teachers. It was her children that were hurt in the accident. But if we're talking about the safety of kids, why do we say we're going to put them on the bus for 30 minutes more a day. I didn't think this was too bad until a couple days ago. I happened to be coming down Market Street and I looked to the east and I see an overpass being put across Gerlach Road. No kid walks on Gerlach Road. It probably handles all of 30, 40 vehicles a day. But they tell me they can't put an overpass on Bigelow Gulch so that my school can still make its route without increasing the route 25 percent and the same amount for these kids that have to ride these buses.	
			Regardless of this 25 percent increase on either end, we don't gain one penny. Not one penny do we get in additional funding. Right now if you go look at the figures -- I'm the business manager, I know what's happening. We are spending in excess of \$20,000 a year hauling these kids back and forth to school. The	

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55.1	27	20	<p>State, oh, gosh, they give us thirteen- and think they're doing us a big favor. Now, if we had 25 percent more than this, who is suffering? If you're going to equalize this thing, then let's go down to Yorium (phonetic), let's go to Safeway, let's go to Food Service and say: Hey, why don't you -- it's your goods that are being delivered here. Why don't you people pay Orchard Prairie School what they need to operate a safe school bus?</p> <p>I can't understand that nothing is being done for Orchard Prairie. As far as I can see, and what Mr. Hamilton put up here, I totally agree. This becomes a north -- the east/west beltway. Since it's benefiting businesses, let the businesses get in here and support us or help us or do something. Don't make the 500 voters of Orchard Prairie have to pick up this expense.</p> <p>SHELLY ESLICK: The city planning office has told me there are no plans for any redesign for the section between Freya and Havana. What consideration has been given for the project with the north/south freeway? Traffic safety, traffics speed is not monitored right now between that section. It's a race track today. Business traffic flow entering and exiting traffic on businesses off of Francis, you risk accidents today by turning against oncoming traffic. Pedestrian safety, pedestrian traffic for increase with no consideration for their safety, i.e., crosswalk and bike lanes. Speed limit considerations, too fast now. They need to slow it down to 35 and monitor the speed with electronic mile-per-hour signs combined with law enforcement.</p>	Francis Avenue is a 4-lane facility. The City of Spokane is the legislative jurisdiction to evaluate and set speed limits.
03.0	27	21	<p>SHELLY ESLICK: How accurate are the car counts models utilized for this project and can that model be accurately audited? I believe the report indicates a traffic volume for the road being built today will be achieved under this model by 2025 support a five-lane</p>	A regional effort was undertaken to develop an interim transportation model set for use with the Bigelow Gulch EA (among other project). FHWA, WSDOT and SRTC approved the use of the model volumes for the analysis included in the EA.

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			road. With the world going green and alternate forms of transportation being developed and utilized, I question the validity of the traffic count and the challenge of the county on the cost of building the five-lane road. Why is the north/south freeway not being completed? We have been told all the right-of-way has been purchased. What consideration of planning has been provided with the city of Millwood with the increase of traffic, bridge congestion, pollution?	Discussion regarding a 5 –lane road is in section 3.2 of the revised EA. NSC construction continues as funding becomes available. Regarding Millwood, see response to 1-8.
55.0	27	22	SHELLY ESLICK: I'm in favor of Bigelow Gulch project for a three-lane road. If you want to build the urban connector into five lanes, why did not the State ask, you know, to have it from Bruce to Stoneman. It just makes more sense. You know, they're going to allow 30,000 more cars to be coming through between Freya and Havana, but they're not going to add any middle turn lanes. So in that area, there's several more businesses that are going to be built. And right now, there's several more accidents. So they're trying to avoid accidents on Bigelow Gulch, but they're going to have a bigger problem in that three- or four-block stretch between Havana and Freya, you know, with not adding anymore, you know, middle turn lanes.	See responses to 14-1 & 1-7 Francis Avenue is a 4-lane arterial. The City of Spokane prioritizes improvements to their infrastructure.
55.0	27	23	SHELLY ESLICK: They're going to have a lot more traffic coming in and out, a lot more traffic coming through, You've got, you know, Country Homes, you've got Whitey's you've got my business. You've got a lot of more industrial area with trucks pulling out. And you're going to add 30,000 more cars without any middle turn lanes. And so there -- they have to talk to the city to try to get anything going to help out with that consideration.	Thank you for your comments. Spokane County has discussed this expansion with the City and will continue to cooperate with the City in the development of their project. The analysis in the Revised EA does not anticipate the volume of traffic you mentioned.
55.0	27	24	SHELLY ESLICK: How can you put in this big highway and not have any consideration with the road that's connecting to it and think about what's going to happen	Please see response to comment 27-13 above.

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03.5	27	25	<p>with all those businesses in there and try, try to work together? If you're going to put it in, then you've got to help out with the, with the three blocks before that.</p> <p>MARILYN HIGBERG: I've been involved with this project for two years now and I've -- I believe we need more time. I heard both Ms. St. John and Mr. Hamilton say so, and others</p> <p>The document that we received is twice the size of the one we got two years ago, and we just haven't had time to really research that the way we need to.</p>	Thank you for your comments. Please see response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the comment period.
05.0	27	26	<p>MARILYN HIGBERG: What I'm researching is that this document reflects research and decisions that were made about a roadway in the 20th century, beginning sometime in the 1990s. We are now in the 21st century, and just recently, we've been paying much more attention to the fact that we have global warming. The price of oil has skyrocketed, and we need to take a different look at how we move goods and transport people. So building a five-lane road through Bigelow Gulch is not a 21st century response to how we need to move people and goods.</p>	Section 2.2 Purpose and Need of the Revised EA outline the project purpose.
04.0	27	27	<p>MARILYN HIGBERG: I think we need to look at public transit, we need to look at how freight is moved from Canada into the Spokane area and points east via rail. And I know that's going on now and it has increased, but I don't have statistics and that's what I'm researching because I believe that more attention needs to be paid to that.</p>	See response to 27-26
.55.1	27	28	<p>JIM KOCH: My main concerns are the traffic flow. As it is now, Sullivan is quite congested, and I don't see how this proposal is going to alleviate that. On top of going between the two schools, East Valley High School and Middle School, I see a lot of traffic that comes from Liberty Lake, Post Falls area, going to the north side. To</p>	See responses to 1-8 & 14-1

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			me, it makes more sense to tie in out at Liberty Lake and go up north and tie into the north/south freeway. I don't see how adding more traffic up Bigelow to Francis to get onto that north/south freeway is going to solve any issues or problems. It's just going to make it more congested. All that traffic stop and go with all the lights versus if we can make a loop out here in the north side further, to me, that makes more sense. But I don't see how all that traffic is going to move any faster or more efficient with the proposed plan.	
55.2	27	29	JIM KOCH: I see a lot of issues along where I live on Bigelow that are going to have to be addressed to widen that road. Speed now is a factor, many accidents, and it's not going to get any better with more traffic out there, no patrolling by sheriff or state patrol. And I've called several times over the years to get some patrols out there, and they're just short-handed to even do so.	Thank you for your comment.
01.3	27	30	DENNIS LARSON: I'm here to speak in favor of the proposed changes and widening of Forker Road and the couplet.	Thank you for your comment.
01.0	27	31	DENNIS LARSON: I'm a retired state trooper. I was assigned that area as a detachment sergeant in 1983 until I became detective sergeant in '85, and my assignment was that area as well for felony accidents. Prior to that, I was a state trooper patrolling the roads up here from 1968 until 1973.	Thank you for your comment.
55.2	27	32	DENNIS LARSON: The area has grown tremendously from the first time that I patrolled up there and the accidents that I covered at that time. I've had friends were hit head-on that road by people making passes, and the volume has increased. The shoulders aren't adequate. I saw the overhead aerial studies that, when I was a detachment sergeant clear back probably -- well, it would have been in the '80s, and I was hopeful at that	Thank you for your comment.

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			time that something would have been done and the road would have been improved. But it's taken a long time, unfortunately too long in my view. I think that we need improvements also for to move commerce across those roads and to separate traffic so that it's more safe.	
55.2	27	33	DENNIS LARSON: The area has grown tremendously from the first time that I patrolled up there and the accidents that I covered at the time. I've had friends who were hit head-on on that road by people making bad passes, and the volume has increased. The shoulders aren't adequate. I saw the overhead aerial studies that, when I was a detachment sergeant clear back probably – well, it would have been in the '80s, and I was hopeful at that time that something would have been done and the road would have been improved. But it's taken a long time, unfortunately too long in my view. I think that we need improvements also for to move commerce across those roads and to separate traffic so that it's more safe.	Thank you for your comment.
03.5	27	34	RICHARD BURNETT: Following a few preliminary observations in the review of the environmental assessment on the Bigelow project, I noted on Channel 2 this morning, they said the county engineers of the road department would have a discussion post-modification. I don't think that is really an accurate description of the event, and it just shows that there are some misunderstandings of, of how this information is to be disseminated and what is actually happening in the process. I made some comments and wrote some information on the previous environmental assessment, and I'm not sure that they have been addressed. I've looked through the document as much as I could or have had time to,	Please see previous response to comments 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3.

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			but I don't know whether they have been addressed and I've made a couple comments and inquiries to some of the authors of the assessment and the building department, and they assured me they would get back to me.	
03.5	27	35	<p>RICHARD BURNETT: I want to talk about the availability of the revised environmental assessment. The time for public comment is extremely short. There are only 12 days from the open house until today's public testimony. This allowed little time to even read these documents, let alone review any referenced supporting data. Two of these days offices were closed for the county because of Thanksgiving, and four were on Saturdays and Sundays, leaving only six days to ask for or receive information.</p> <p>The project manager from Stokes and Associates (sic) informed me that the Department of Highways recommends that environmental assessments to be a maximum of 10 -- or 15 to 50 pages. This document is probably near 800 to a thousand pages, with many documents and studies referenced but not included. This document is about 20 times larger than the maximum recommended size of an environmental assessment, and still at least ten times larger, even if you exclude the appendix.</p> <p>The Federal Department of Highway recommends a minimum of 30 days for comment for their 15- to 50-page document. An extension of the comment period would be in the public interest in the spirit of assuring -- and for public response and input and to allow appropriate time for adequate and thorough review of these documents by all concerned. I would suggest at least an additional 75 days and another public testimony period near the end of such an extension.</p>	Please see previous response to comment 1-3.

Action Code	Letter Number	Comment Number	Comment	Response
01.1	27	36	RICHARD BURNETT: I want to go on record that I have requested information from the assessment's author and from the County regarding information referenced in these documents, but I have not received it yet. I do not think that the delay has anything to do with other than logistics and time flow because of the holidays.	Please see previous response to comment 1-4.
03.5	27	37	RICHARD BURNETT: I'm not casting any dispersions on anybody, but the time is getting short and in fairness for thorough and reasonable response, more time will be needed for review of this document and any supporting data that should be available for review regarding the assessment.	Please see previous response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the review period.
65.0	27	38	RICHARD BURNETT: A couple other issues I'd like to raise and mention briefly. One of them is the noise issue. From my reading of the documents, the baseline used for the noise modeling study do not include any existing situations such as trees, berms, or other noise barriers, which should be accounted for in evaluating additional noise impacts and the requirements because trees and berms and so forth will be removed, and it's not -- the baseline will be actually lower than what they have in their model. There's almost absolutely, or perhaps no -- only one instance of noise mitigation proposed. I have spoken with the assessment's author, who's in the process of getting me in contact with their noise specialist to answer some of my questions, but he's been out of the office recently and we are still trying to connect. The approach of the assessment seems to put the noise issues off until later, then trust us or litigate. Jake brakes or compression brakes were not addressed and should be prohibited. I note that the airport -- in an article yesterday I believe it was -- recommends that there be rules of -- in areas	Please see response to comment 1-5.

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05.2	27	39	<p>with noise above 65 decibels. In many instances along this corridor, with this new roadway, the 65 decibel will be increased and there's no addressing of building codes or, or mitigation or anything about that.</p> <p>RICHARD BURNETT: There seems to be no funding or overall philosophy to address this, the noise issue, or the issue of roadside vegetation that potentially will be removed and how the County will address the fund issues of litigation and visual degradation.</p>	Please see response to comment 1-5.
20.0	27	40	<p>RICHARD BURNETT: The second issue is wells and water. This assessment addresses some items that were ignored in the previous assessment, but the issues of water wells that may be damaged is not completely addressed. If public water is substituted for private wells, will the cost of water from another provider be the same as from operating one's own well? I'd like to get the answer to that question.</p>	See response to 1-6
55.2	27	41	<p>RICHARD BURNETT: An issue I'd like to address briefly is the design and safety issues. One design possibility that was not addressed was the two-lane configuration with center turn lanes at a 35-mile-an-hour speed limit. This might fit better long-term when in 15 to 20 years this area may be urban. Building a road larger than the size of Trent Avenue across the prairie seems excessive. It is argued that safety is the justification for these changes. I would suggest that a 35-mile-per-hour limit would increase safety immensely. This consideration should be -- this should be evaluated now for safety issues, even -- even immediately before the road is constructed.</p>	See response to 1-7
55.0	27	42	<p>RICHARD BURNETT: I request any documentation that the county roads, county roads department have where they have requested greater traffic speed enforcement along Bigelow Gulch. I believe that most of the traffic</p>	Please see response to comment 1-7.

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			accidents are caused by excess speeds. The traffic studies I've seen suggest that more than 50 percent of the cars going across Bigelow Gulch exceed the 45-miles-an-hour limit. So I'm requesting that any, anything that they, the county engineers or roads department have done requesting greater enforcement be provided to me. I note that multiple times per month the traffic emphasis is set up in the 35-mile-an-hour zone at the bottom of Argonne hill, but very seldom along Bigelow Gulch.	
55.1	27	43	RICHARD BURNETT: I note that the additional traffic that this project probably will generate has not been addressed as it is sure to affect the town of Millwood and the town of -- and Spokane Valley at Sullivan Road. There's going to be a huge draw of more traffic, and it seems that Sullivan Road and the city of Millwood are at a maximum capacity for their roads.	Please see response to comment 1-8.
03.5	27	44	GENE LORENSEN: I'd like to say that the whole project was done in a way that initially was to have as little public input as possible initially. The only reason we're having meetings like this is that people found out what was going on and started demanding them. Otherwise, it would have gone by with no public output at all. We never even heard about it until the so-called time of public input was over, half over, and it was public demand. That caused the county road people to extend it. And that's just history.	Comments noted. Please see section 1.3 of the Revised EA regarding the public involvement.
04.0	27	45	GENE LORENSEN: I'd like to just say a couple of things. The original project was supposed to connect crossing on Stoneman Road, and that was abandoned to go on Bigelow Gulch. I still think that the Stoneman connection would be a very good thing. It's going to have to be done anyway in the future. If it could be done now, it would provide an alternative route for the traffic	See the discussion on purpose and need in the Revised EA. Additional roadway facilities may become necessary as the Spokane Metropolitan area expands in the future but Stoneman Road does not satisfy the purpose and need for the Bigelow Gulch/Forker Road Corridor.

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			<p>that is going from the northern Spokane area to the Valley. It would draw a lot of traffic away from Bigelow Gulch, which is a dangerous road. There's no doubt of that. Stoneman is a straight shot, and it's not a dangerous road.</p> <p>By doing both routes, an improvement on Bigelow Gulch and Stoneman Road, the two would handle the traffic without having to do the projected road on Bigelow Gulch which -- anybody knows, it's an extension of the freeway. It could be done on a lesser scale with the Stoneman connection. And I think that would save millions of dollars for the taxpayers too.</p>	
03.5	27	46	<p>GENE LORENSEN: It would be nice to have a little more time because we just got the information on the environmental assessments and all of that stuff, and it's, it's a lot. There were over 500 comments, I believe, that had to be addressed. And we haven't had time to really study them. It would be nice to have more time.</p>	<p>Please see previous response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the review period.</p>
03.5	27	47	<p>TODD WOOD: I would just like to ask for some extended time to overlook this extremely huge rebuttal you guys had on the EA.</p>	<p>Please see previous response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the review period.</p>
04.0	27	48	<p>KATHY CUTLER: If you're going to work on Bigelow Gulch Road, I would really strongly -- I strongly feel and my husband strongly feels to make it entirely safe for all people that want to use this gulch, that we would like to see a huge bicycle trail on each side going to and from. At this point, my husband rides his bicycle to work to try to be greening our environment. He rides about seven and a half miles a day down Argonne Road. He comes up through North Wood to avoid traffic on Argonne, but when he hits the first curve on Argonne at Weile Road, where the grange road is, there is no place on the westbound lane for him to ride safely. He must walk his bicycle. And I fear every night that he will get hit by a</p>	<p>Comments noted. Please see section 4.13 Parks and Recreation regarding bicycling.</p>

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05.0	27	49	<p>car. That's the only comment I have. If you're going to work on the gulch, please take into consideration the needs of those that prefer to bicycle as an alternative method of transportation.</p> <p>GEORGE MARTIN: I want to get it over with and get it going. How's that? They said they were going to finish it in '04. I think if they're going to have it ready when the north/south freeway gets on so they have that late coming this way, they ought to get it going here pretty quick.</p>	Thank you for your comments.
05.0	27	50	<p>GEORGE MARTIN: We don't want any Jake brakes going by our bedroom windows there when the cars are going down there.</p>	The issue of Jake brakes was addressed in Appendix 3, Table 3-3, pages 163 and 164 of the Revised EA.
01.3	27	51	<p>JOYCELYNN STRAIGHT: I have three things here that have popped up as I've been sitting here listening. And the first one, I guess, is I don't live out here on Bigelow Gulch. I live on Rowan Avenue in an area that's very close to where we thought the north/south corridor would go. I'm one of the people that wants to have it where we believed it was going to go. It is of no use to me over here in Bigelow Gulch, and I'm sure a lot of my neighbors feel the same way. So my comment is -- and it's really also a question is -- why is it being put through an area in which the citizens don't want it but not put through the area where it was originally thought to be going through and the citizens want it, and it's a shorter route, and it would be less expensive? It makes no sense.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comment. The proposed Bigelow Gulch Road/Forker Road improvement is not a substitute for the North/South freeway. Please see response to comment 27-13 above.</p> <p>Chapter 3 of the Revised EA explains the process used to select the proposed alignment.</p>
03.0	27	52	<p>JOYCELYNN STRAIGHT: I'm wondering if you have notified the rest of the people of Spokane that they are not going to get what they thought, which was this quick route to go north/south. I didn't know about it, and I would never have known that we were going to lose this route unless I had relative that were out on Bigelow</p>	See response to comment 27-51 above.

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			<p>Gulch that were being, you know, are now figuring out that it's going to go through their property instead, a very long and cumbersome road that is not a quick north/south corridor and does nothing for them and it would have done a great benefit for us, especially the people that live along Market and Green Street. It would have been a great hop-on road to go north and south and apparently is not going to be there anymore.</p>	
05.0	27	53	<p>JOYCELYNN STRAIGHT: So I guess I'd also like to know if you can contact me and tell me whether you have put information out to the rest of the people in Spokane that they will not be given what they have thought for years they were going to be given.</p>	See response to comment 27-51 above.
03.5	27	54	<p>JOYCELYNN STRAIGHT: I'm looking at this, what's called an EA statement, that's very fat. I need more time to be able to look at it. So I'm also asking that there's -- extend the time that's going to be given. I was an urban regional planning student out at EWU and actually gave input on some EIS statements, and I know from looking at this, this is the size of -- larger actually then the size of most EIS statements that we worked on or saw or had to learn about or use as, you know, student guides. This is incredible for -- I mean it's an EA, which is supposed to be a very small document. I just can't believe that people have had enough of an opportunity, whether citizens or county employees to go through that thoroughly enough to understand what's being written about.</p>	<p>Please see previous response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the review period.</p> <p>Please see response to comment 1-3 regarding the size of environmental documents.</p>
55.2	27	55	<p>JOYCELYNN STRAIGHT: As I was coming up here tonight, I was going about 20 miles an hour because it was dark and the roads were windy, and I nearly hit a deer. And this was in a van in which, you know, it was totaled by a deer hit going along the Pullman freeway at 55 miles an hour. And my concern is that Bigelow</p>	Thank you for your comments. The issue of deer and other wildlife mortality was addressed in section 4.6 of the Revised EA.

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55.1	27	56	<p>Gulch, although it's slated to be 45 miles an hour, if it's straightened out, people are going to be pushing for it to be 55 and there are going to be incredible deer hits. You're not going to be able to stop, you know, and deaths. And I don't know if you've addressed that in there, what you figured as the death rate, whether it's going to be higher or lower due to these deer encounters, or if you've addressed it at all.</p> <p>STEVE SPALDING: I think a lot of small businesses in that corridor is somewhat concerned on the traffic flow going from Argonne up to -- I'd call it up to that corridor Whitey's myself. Some other small businesses are going to have some problems getting the customer base from the Valley up to the northern corridor. And I'm just concerned in that the traffic flow. And as long as there's a way to get our delivery trucks or our wreckers, stuff like that, from that corridor out to the I-90 Coeur d'Alene corridor back and forth, my customer base and also my own vehicles.</p>	<p>This concern seems to be related to the construction of the roadway and maintaining the flow of traffic during the construction period. Spokane County intends to maintain access to businesses during construction and to maintain the flow of traffic on this roadway.</p>
05.0	27	57	<p>STEVE SPALDING: I've seen traffic problems cause small businesses 3, 5, 10 percent cost of business. When you're only running on a 3 to 5 percent, 6 percent profit, it kind of kills us.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see section 4.16 of the Revised EA regarding the impact of construction on businesses. Access to businesses will be maintained</p>
55.2	27	58	<p>STEVE SPALDING: I'm excited about the project. I'm -- I don't know about the north/south he was talking from the Bigelow over. I think it's -- I've lived out in the Valley for a long time. I am glad to see the traffic, hopefully a four-lane road, people won't get hurt. That triple-S curve or whatever you want to call it down by the grange is a real -- people get hurt, and I hope that this will solve that. I'm sure it will.</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments.</p>
05.0	27	59	<p>STEVE SPALDING: So just concerned about small businesses trying to get our business from the Valley, from Coeur d'Alene, Montana, up to our establishments</p>	<p>Comments noted. Please see previous response to comments 27-56 and 27-57.</p>

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			and, and it's just hard to, hard to make some money and on a small profit margin that we all run on. And if you get five to six customers saying, "I don't care to go there," we feel that instantly. And I'm glad the project is going myself.	
05.0	27	60	CHARLOTTE MANGAN: I've lived along Bigelow Gulch since 1987, and I've been aware of the steps that have been taken to bring us to this current situation. In the '90s, we were presented with a plan to widen and improve Bigelow Gulch. Although it was not perfect, it did address traffic and safety issues. We were told that it would be initiated in approximately ten years. For the past ten years, a totally unrecognizable plan has replaced the original one. A freeway -- or a rose by any other name, a highway.	Comments noted.
03.5	27	61	CHARLOTTE MANGAN: The process has been flawed by a lack of communication to the residents and contradictory statements to individual land owners. The community has seen members lose their water, as in the Argonne intersection area; staff have been far from straightforward. All has led the community, this community to distrust its government.	See response to 23-1
05.0	27	62	CHARLOTTE MANGAN: The multi-lane plan carves an ugly scar through what continues to be a rural area. This plan encourages more speed, more traffic, bringing more problems the county will have to address, especially financially.	Comments noted.
40.0	27	63	CHARLOTTE MANGAN: Considering the state's 2000/2001 plan to avoid urban sprawl by protecting the rural areas as well as the wildlife as in the 20-acre game preserve on Palmer Road where I live, this highway plan is untenable, if not disastrous.	Comments noted.
05.0	27	64	CHARLOTTE MANGAN: Law enforcement simply asks for a widening of the road to allow better patrol and	Comments noted.

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45.2	27	65	<p>safer stops, and, as an aside, having been married to the police chief of 11 years here, I do know a little bit about law enforcement's mind on this issue.</p> <p>CHARLOTTE MANGAN: Anyone familiar with urban sprawl can easily see what this highway will bring in terms of development and destruction of the farmland and the woodland. We are not a crowded metropolis. It seems to me greed clearly influences that which drives the move for this highway.</p>	Comments noted.
03.5	27	66	<p>KATHY JOHNSON: I attended the meetings ten years ago and thought I knew what was happening. I know now that I don't, and although I am a reading teacher, there's no way I can read your EA document at this time. So I plead that you would give us more time.</p>	Comments noted. Please see previous response to comment 1-3 regarding the extension of the review period.
40.7	27	67	<p>KATHY JOHNSON: In the interim, while we are catching up with what has gone on in our environment, which we pay for, I would like to raise a few questions. I'm sorry if they're answered in this document. I wasn't able to find them tonight. When I did pursue the greenbelt section, I see that there's no protection or consideration given for the underground river, which crosses northwest to southeast at the T intersection of Prairie and Bigelow Gulch. I understand that they're going to raise the road over this area. At this time, there's no provision for controlling the noxious weeds that will appear when a slope is added which is not native to the area. At this point, the neighbors and the land owners who own the farms in that area, particularly on the farm side, the north side, or county side of the line, are called upon to control those noxious weeds, to take care of all the hoaricress not only on our property but also on the sides of the road that should be maintained by the county. The county does not, however, meet us at the halfway and take care of the noxious weeds that occur on the</p>	<p>Comments noted. Groundwater has been addressed in section 4.2 of the Revised EA.</p> <p>The control of noxious weeds is an important consideration for all projects. Spokane County must comply with RCW Title 17 Weeds, Rodents and Pests and the requirements set forth by the Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board. Spokane County Public Works will be responsible for controlling and preventing the spread of noxious weeds (as defined by the Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board) on their roadway right-of-way. Please see the Spokane County Noxious Weed Control Board website: http://www.spokanecounty.org/weedboard/ A mitigation commitment has been added to Attachment D Mitigation Commitment List, of this FONSI.</p>

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			<p>county road right-of-way or side road. I hear that we're going to need more space on the side of either road, and that means more land that the county should clean rather than we clean.</p> <p>Again, raising the land there will make more weeds. And I hope -- my question is: Will the county take care of their noxious weeds, particularly the hoaricress that has invaded our area.</p>	
05.0	27	68	<p>KATHY JOHNSON: We clean up the garbage along the road, a two-lane road. That garbage will be tripled, doubled, quadrupled, whatever. Has the county planned to clean up the garbage from the increased amount of traffic in that area.</p>	<p>Routine maintenance of the roadway, including the removal of roadside litter, will be conducted by Spokane County on an established schedule.</p>
45.1	27	69	<p>KATHY JOHNSON: There are school bus stops on Bigelow Gulch for East Valley and West Valley schools, as well as we've heard from the Orchard Prairie school. This will increase cost to the taxpayers that ends up coming through the school system because of increased bus routes for all three of those school areas. There are -- are there plans for places for school buses to turn around and/or pick up students as they do now at the side of the two-lane highway on the access roads?</p>	<p>Thank you for your comments. Please see response to comment 27-19.</p>
45.2	27	70	<p>KATHY JOHNSON: How do we decrease fatalities when we're increasing speed? I assume that -- well, living along the road, I know that if we have four lanes, we have faster traffic. Currently pedestrians cross -- not pedestrians -- homeowners cross from the north side of Bigelow Gulch to the south side of Bigelow Gulch to pick up their mail because the city only delivers to the city side, or the south side of the road, and the county has asked them to deliver the mail. Will the county then deliver the mail? This is another increased cost to us, the taxpayers.</p>	<p>The Hillyard Post Office has indicated that they will deliver mail on both sides since the new roadway will have paved 8 foot shoulders.</p>

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05.0	27	71	KATHY JOHNSON: There are many negative impacts on our home, our farms, our schools and our businesses, as well as potential businesses. I would also submit that this hearing should be for the homeowners, the farm owners, the people who have lived in the prairie for a long time and not to increase business to the north or business to the east. And I would also submit, knowing that the people who call or come to the farmhouse for help when they're in distress on the two-lane road, most of which are from Idaho, this is Washington taxpayer money, and I'd like us to consider the Washington homeowners' needs.	Thank you for your comment.
20.0	27	72	TIM KNIGHT: Within three days of them starting the project, digging the trench there, I lost my well and have been through about three years of hell. And after contacting the County, letting them know what happened, they had an inspector come out and brought me, agreed to have the contractor Westway bring me water. And then within a few days they told them not to bring me water anymore. And then I was told that they didn't believe they caused my water problems. They hired an expert geologist, some -- I don't know exactly what they're called -- to come and take a look at my property. And, of course, they came back and said, "Oh, the construction had nothing to do with that."	See response 23-1
02.0	27	73	TIM KNIGHT: I've been, myself, personally out of town most the last two years working in New Orleans on Hurricane Katrina, so I haven't been pushing this until recently. Since I returned home, I started investigating, talking to neighbors.	Thank you for your comments.
20.0	27	74	TIM KNIGHT: I found out that people even further away from this construction on my road had issues with their well with filters plugging, pressure tanks going bad. Another neighbor happened to know the name of the	See response 23-1

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			<p>person running this construction project, who had ran the construction project. I tracked him down, and I have a lot of information, pictures, statements he gave me assuring me that they did indeed not only run into a lot of surface water but disrupt an existing cistern that still, had water still fed to several directions outside of that that, you know, they figured was really old.</p> <p>My bottom line is I believe that this is what affected my well, as well as the person just north of that construction also had an issue with their water. And they hooked them onto the water system there. I was basically told "tough." And, and also I was told wait until winter, see if it comes back. Long story short, in the middle of winter, of course I have more water because the ground surface water is more saturated. For three years, I've never been able to water my lawn again. We have to haul water nine to ten months out of the year just to have just basics.</p>	
20.0	27	75	<p>TIM KNIGHT: When I looked in part of the impact study on ground water, it says that the County will -- any well within a thousand feet, that they will test it first and then after the construction project to see if it was affected. Well, I am within a thousand feet. Mine was never tested ahead of time. And I really wish that procedure had been followed because I believe that would have proved what I've been trying to prove for three years, and that is that this construction project rerouted the water, affected this existing old water system under the road.</p>	See response 23-1
20.0	27	76	<p>TIM KNIGHT: I do not believe that a house that had had the same water source for 80 years just happened to dry up right when this was being done. And I know that when they broke through there and had a lot of surface water, they had to actually change how they put that</p>	See response 23-1

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			<p>culvert in because there was so much surface water there it was washing away their sand. And they've rerouted that, and that's the water that I believe has fed well. And I want something done about it. You know, I still have an issue with no water, or very little water. And I don't know how many other people will get affected as this project grows across or when they start the next stage just up from that. If, you know, it's going to -- I don't know if you can make it worse, but affect my water gain.</p>	
20.0	27	77	<p>TIM KNIGHT: In their impact study on this ground water, the experts they had hired said that this particular project, this part right there where they put this trench in, was the most likely area to affect wells and springs because of the depth that they were going to dig there. It also says they were only going to dig 14 feet deep, and if you go look, they did more like 25 feet deep. And according to the manager, the project manager, he said, you know, Yeah, we went at least 25 feet deep. So I'm, you know, my complaint is that -- I'm not against the road being fixed. I drive that road. I'm okay with that. But I'm not okay with being put in the situation I have been because I don't think this was handled right to begin with. My well should have been tested before they started the project.</p>	See response 23-1