



Post Office Box 24
Joshua Tree CA 92252
www.mbconservation.org

January 16, 2025

To: lrmtpl@gosbcta.com

Re: Long Range Multimodal Transportation Plan (LRMTP)

Dear Reader,

The Morongo Basin Conservation Association (MBCA) is pleased to provide comments on the LRMTP.

As one of the six regions within the LRMTP, the Morongo Basin is distinct among the regions studied. Its predominantly rural character, ecological diversity and natural beauty draws millions of visitors from the nearby megalopolis of Southern California. Its proximity to the I-10, I-15, and I-40 makes the Morongo Basin a thoroughfare to these major highways.

The projection of the 40% increase in growth of the Morongo Basin is in stark contrast to the limited growth projected for the Morongo Basin within the Countywide plan (CWP). The lack of infrastructure (water and sewer) will constrain future growth. The discrepancy between these two visions of the future must be reconciled or fully explained and not codified in the LRMTP.

The following issues must be acknowledged and addressed within this forward-looking plan:

1. The Barstow International Gateway (BIG) logistics center will generate additional traffic on State Highway 247. This highway will serve as a shortcut to the massive warehouses along the I-10 corridor. More roadway maintenance will be needed with this increase of traffic.
2. State Highway 247 is in the process of receiving Scenic Highway status that will increase traffic on this highway.
3. State Highway 247 is a notoriously unsafe highway and an increase in traffic will further exacerbate safety issues.
4. The constraints on the ability to improve this highway due to existing improvements, Right of Ways and topography.

5. The use of State Highway 247 by trucks transporting agricultural products from the Imperial Valley. Trucks may be using this highway to circumvent weight limitations.
6. The increased traffic on State Highway 62 due to the above issues on 247.
7. State Highways 247 and 62 sever wildlife corridors between the desert and mountains. The need for safe passage of wildlife must be considered and anticipated with the LRMTTP.

The North Desert area will be significantly impacted by the construction of the Brightline West high speed rail project. The LRMTTP could take the opportunity to advocate for the inclusion of a rail stop in the north desert for this rail project. One can imagine the frustration of commuters stuck on their commute on I-15 as they watch the train passing at high speed!

Thank you for your consideration of these comments. We hope to see these issues more fully covered in the final version of this plan.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Steve Bardwell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, stylized "S" and "B".

Steve Bardwell, director
Morongo Basin Conservation Association