To: Ryan Walkowiak, Environmental Documents Unit, NDOR
From: Chris Hassler, Highway Civil Rights Coordinator, NDOR
Date: 21 June 2016
RE: Updated Civil Rights Analysis, CN 51543, STP-92-1(126), Gering to South Bayard

Updated Civil Rights Analysis for CN 51543

Environmental Justice Regulatory Background and Methodology:

Executive Order 12898, *Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, was signed on February 11, 1994, and requires that, to the extent practicable and permitted by law, low-income or minority populations may not receive disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects as a result of a proposed project. Federal agencies must take the appropriate and necessary steps to identify and address disproportionately high and adverse effects of federal projects on the health or environment of low-income and minority populations. Also, representatives of any low-income or minority populations in the community that may be affected by a project must be given the opportunity to be included in the impact assessment and public involvement process.

On June 14, 2012, FHWA issued Order 6640.23A, *Actions to Address Environmental Justice in Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations*, which established policies and procedures for the FHWA and state transportation agencies to use in complying with Executive Order 12898. The Order provided definitions for multiple terms and concepts applicable to this analysis.

> *Adverse Effects* are defined as "the totality of significant individual or cumulative human health or environmental effects, including interrelated social and economic effects, which may include, but are not limited to: bodily impairment, infirmity, illness or death; air, noise, and water pollution and soil contamination; destruction or disruption of human-made or natural resources; destruction or diminution of aesthetic values; destruction or disruption of community cohesion or a community's economic vitality; destruction or disruption of the availability of public and private facilities and services; vibration; adverse employment effects; displacement of persons, businesses, farms, or nonprofit organizations; increased traffic congestion, isolation, exclusion or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community; and the denial of, reduction in, or significant delay in the receipt of, benefits of FHWA programs, policies, or activities."
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> A *Disproportionately High and Adverse Effect to Low-Income and Minority Populations* is defined as an adverse effect that:
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> 1. is predominately borne by a minority population and/or a low-income population; OR
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> 2. will be suffered by the minority population and/or low-income population and is appreciably more severe or greater in magnitude than the adverse effect that will be suffered by the nonminority population and/or non-low-income population.

Minority is defined as a person who is:

1. Black: a person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa;

2. Hispanic or Latino: a person of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, Central or South American, or other Spanish culture or origin, regardless of race;

3. Asian American: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of the Far East, Southeast Asia or the Indian subcontinent;

4. American Indian and Alaskan Native: a person having origins in any of the original people of North America, South America (including Central America), and who maintains cultural identification through tribal affiliation or community recognition; OR

5. Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: a person having origins in any of the original peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.

A *Low-Income* person is defined as a person whose median household income is at or below the Department of Health and Human Services poverty guidelines. (*Note – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services does not publish tabulations of the number of people below the DHHS poverty guidelines, which are a simplified version of the federal poverty thresholds. The federal poverty thresholds are used for calculating all official poverty population statistics, and are updated annually by the Census Bureau. The best approximation for the number of people below the DHHS poverty guidelines in a particular area is the number of persons below the Census Bureau poverty thresholds in that area.)*

A *Minority Population* is defined as any readily identifiable group of minority persons who live in geographic proximity, and if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.

A *Low-Income* population is defined as any readily identifiable group of low-income persons who live in geographic proximity, and, if circumstances warrant, geographically dispersed/transient persons (such as migrant workers or Native Americans) who will be similarly affected by a proposed FHWA program, policy, or activity.

In a December 16, 2011, memorandum titled *Guidance on Environmental Justice and NEPA*, the FHWA laid out a basic methodology for performing Environmental Justice analysis. NDOR has adopted, and FHWA has approved, an Environmental Justice methodology which follows the basic framework of the 2011 memorandum, but expands upon a few vague or undefined concepts. NDOR Environmental Justice methodology is as follows:

1. Using localized census tract data and other relevant information sources, data is gathered and readily identifiable groups or clusters of minority or low-income persons in the EJ study area are listed. Small clusters or dispersed populations are not overlooked. Study area data is also compared with the data of larger, identifiable areas (census tracts, cities, counties,

NDOR districts, etc.) to determine the proportion of minority and low-income persons present in the study area.

2. Minority and low-income populations are identified where:

   (a) A readily identifiable group or cluster of minority or low-income persons is located in the EJ study area (for example, a low-income housing complex, or a workplace of mostly minority persons); OR

   (b) The minority or low-income population of the study area exceeds 50 percent; OR

   (c) The minority or low-income population percentage of the affected area is *meaningfully greater* than the minority population percentage in the general population or other appropriate unit of geographic analysis. The *meaningfully greater* standard is fact-dependent and requires professional judgment, but in most cases *meaningfully greater* is about 6%-8% or above.

3. If minority and/or low-income populations are not present in the EJ study area, the analysis is concluded.

4. If minority and/or low-income populations are present in the EJ study area, potential disproportionately high and adverse effects of the proposed project are examined. If none are identified, the analysis is concluded.

5. If minority and/or low-income populations are present in the EJ study area, and potential disproportionately high and adverse effects of the proposed project have been identified, proposed mitigation will be considered. Commonly, the application of effective mitigation techniques can reduce or eliminate adverse effects that might otherwise fall disproportionately upon minority and low-income populations.

6. Finally, the analysis concludes with a determination that the proposed project either will or will not result in disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income populations. State transportation agencies lack the regulatory authority to make a final determination in cases where potential disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and/or low-income populations exist. In the event that potential disproportionately high and adverse effects to minority and low-income populations are anticipated, even when mitigation is expected to reduce or eliminate the effects, the analysis and determination must be forwarded to the FHWA for comment, revision, and approval.

Project Location and Description

This project is located in multiple Census tracts and travels through or nearby multiple localities in Scotts Bluff and Morrill Counties. This project will resurface 16.65 miles of N-92 located in Scotts Bluff and Morrill Counties, starting 0.26 miles west of the east corporate limits of Gering and extending east to 0.27 miles west of the west corporate limits of Melbeta. Then, continuing 0.15 miles east of the east corporate limits of Melbeta and extending east to 0.15 miles east of Chimney Rock Road. This project will also resurface 2.04 miles of L79E located in Scotts Bluff County, starting 0.06 miles south of the US-26/L79E junction and extending south to 0.03 miles north of the N-92/L79E junction. There will be no detour for this project

Examination of Study Area Population: Census Data and Other Observations

The Environmental Justice data for this project is as follows:

Area	Minority Population	Hispanic Population	Population Below the Poverty Level
West Bayard Precinct (Morrill County)	12.1%	10.7%	13%
Tract 9529 (Scotts Bluff County)	14%	11.9%	4.6%
Tract 9532 (Scotts Bluff County)	7%	5.6%	8.7%
Tract 9538 (Scotts Bluff County)	25.6%	22.3%	11.5%
Village of McGrew (Scotts Bluff County)	8.6%	2.9%	30.4%
Village of Melbeta (Scotts Bluff County)	5.4%	4.5%	18.8%
City of Minatare (Scotts Bluff County)	27.6%	24.8%	12.3%
Morrill County	15.6%	13.6%	14%
Scotts Bluff County	24.4%	21.1%	13.8%

*Data on minority and Hispanic persons collected from 2010 Decennial US Census, Summary File 1, Table P5.
**Data on low-income persons collected from American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates, Table S1701.

The Limited English Proficiency data for this project is as follows:

Area	% of Population that Speaks ONLY English	Languages Other Than English Spoken by 5% or Greater of the Total Population*	Population of Area
West Bayard Precinct (Morrill County)	97.8%	None	677
Tract 9529 (Scotts Bluff County)	92.8%	None	2,685
Tract 9532 (Scotts Bluff County)	95.7%	None	1,400
Tract 9538 (Scotts Bluff County)	85.5%	None	4,175
Village of McGrew (Scotts Bluff County)	100%	None	43
Village of Melbeta (Scotts Bluff County)	87.8%	None	115
City of Minatare (Scotts Bluff County)	80.2%	None	860

*All data from American Community Survey 2010-2014 5-Year Estimates, Table B16001.
** These figures reflect the population of an area that speaks a language other than English, and also speaks English "Less than Very Well."

In general, the census tracts and other areas through which this project travels have lower or consistent populations of minority and low-income persons when compared with their respective counties. In one instance, the Village of McGrew, the percentage of low-income persons is about 17% higher than the low-income figure for Scotts Bluff County. The Village of McGrew therefore does contain a meaningfully greater population of low-income persons when compared with Scotts Bluff County.

No businesses, residences, or organizations likely to be predominately used by minority or low-income populations were identified in the vicinity of the project.

The areas in which this project is located are mostly English-speaking. In the areas surveyed, none of the data indicates the presence of an LEP population that reaches the NDOR LEP outreach triggers of 5% or 1,000 persons.

Adverse Effects to Minority and/or Low-Income Populations

The following project information is relevant:

There will be no detour for this project.

There is no anticipated right-of-way acquisition for this project.

Access to adjacent properties will be maintained.

There will be no isolation, exclusion or separation of minority or low-income individuals within a given community or from the broader community.

There will be no restrictions of access to essential services.

There will be no relocations or building removal.

Based on these project considerations, there are no anticipated adverse effects to the low-income population in the Village of McGrew.

Conclusions

A low-income population was identified in the Village of McGrew. However, there will be no disproportionately high and adverse human health or environmental effects visited upon minority and low-income populations, as defined in FHWA Order 6640.23A, for the reasons cited in the previous section of this document.

No LEP outreach is required for this project because, in the areas surveyed, none of the data indicates the presence of an LEP population that reaches the NDOR LEP outreach triggers of 5% or 1,000 persons.