



# NEWS RELEASE

**Arizona House of Representatives**

**Representative David Cook (R-7)**

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

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**Wednesday, May 1, 2024**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

## House Transportation Chairman David Cook Supports Funding for State Route 88 Improvements

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – State Representative David Cook, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, sent a letter this week to Congressman Greg Stanton expressing support for the Arizona Department of Transportation’s (ADOT) application for Community Project Funding for Fiscal Year 2025. Stanton is a member of the U.S. House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure and serves as Vice Chair of the Highways and Transit subcommittee.

The project funding would support significant improvements along State Route (SR) 88, known as the Apache Trail, such as upgrading culverts, stabilizing slopes, and installing concrete barriers to manage water flows and debris. These improvements are intended to reduce frequent closures, decrease maintenance costs, and ensure the road can withstand future extreme weather events.

Chairman Cook has been a leading champion of efforts to reopen and improve the historic Apache Trail roadway along SR 88, which serves as a vital transportation link for area residents, visitors, and the local economy.

Representative Cook’s letter to Congressman Stanton is attached.

*David Cook is a Republican member of the Arizona House of Representatives serving Legislative District 7, which includes Pinal, Gila, Coconino, and Navajo Counties. He is Chairman of the House Transportation & Infrastructure Committee and the House International Trade Committee. Follow him on X/Twitter at @RepDavidCook.*

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# Arizona House of Representatives

## Phoenix, Arizona 85007

April 29, 2024

The Honorable Greg Stanton  
207 Cannon House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

**Subject: ADOT's CPF application for the design of SR 88 improvements**

Dear Congressman Stanton:

I wish to express my support of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) in seeking FY 25 Community Project Funding (CPF) to reopen State Route (SR) 88. These funds will be used to advance resiliency in the planning for reopening this road. This approach will provide ongoing benefits to the state and stakeholders by preserving the state of good repair of the reopened road. ADOT will benefit from the development of best practices which will improve the resiliency of the state highway system to withstand extreme weather events that are impacting our infrastructure more and more frequently.

In 2019, the 123,832-acre Woodbury Fire burned through the Superstition Mountains. Then, on September 23, 2019, Tropical Storm Lorena pummeled the region with up to 6 inches of water. Extensive roadway damage occurred, and rock debris obstructed the roadway following this severe flooding event. As a result, a 5-mile, unpaved section of SR 88 (Apache Trail) from the Fish Creek Hill Overlook/Rest Area (milepost 222) to milepost 227 near Reavis Trailhead Road remains closed for public safety reasons.

SR 88 was constructed in the early 1900s to provide construction access from Mesa to the planned Theodore Roosevelt Dam. Upon the dam's completion, the route remained a popular tourist attraction for motor enthusiasts. SR 88 also provides access to recreational activities beloved by Arizonans and visitors alike, such as Canyon Lake, Apache Lake, Theodore Roosevelt Lake, Tonto National Monument, and a wealth of trailheads, scenic vistas, and shoreline areas in the Tonto National Forest. The route was designated as Arizona's first Historic Road and remains a scenic roadway to this day. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Office also recognized the route's significance through an Arizona State Register of Historic Places designation. Extensive damage to the roadway following the Woodbury Fire, Tropical Storm Lorena, and other extreme weather events has rendered this historic route inaccessible to the public.

The closed section of SR 88 has received extensive public support and media attention. Advocates for the route's reopening range from Apache Trail businesses to motorized access enthusiasts to elected officials. These diverse groups have been working alongside ADOT to build support for SR 88 improvements, but additional funding is needed to bring the project to fruition.

This funding will allow ADOT to incorporate resiliency improvements (such as upsized culverts, slope stabilization, and concrete barriers to retain flows and debris) into the final design of the SR 88 project. This will mitigate the negative impacts of increasingly common extreme weather events on the roadway,

limiting route users' closures and lowering the route's maintenance and repair costs. This funding will also support NEPA and any other necessary environmental clearance processes to ensure that project improvements do not negatively impact the Superstition Wilderness Area, Tonto National Forest, the broader region, and associated communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David L. Cook". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" being the most prominent.

The Honorable David Cook  
Arizona House of Representatives, LD 7  
House Transportation Committee Chair  
House International Trade Chair