



Board of Supervisors

Santa Cruz County

LUIS CARLOS DAVIS
District 1

RUDY MOLERA
District 2

JOHN FANNING
District 3

August 29, 2026

RE: Scoping Comments – Environmental Assessment for Proposed New Border Patrol Station near Sonoita, Santa Cruz County, Arizona

Dear Mr. Petrilla:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding U.S. Customs and Border Protection's Environmental Assessment for the proposed acquisition of land and construction, operation, and maintenance of a new Border Patrol Station near Sonoita.

CBP's scoping letter identifies a preferred location approximately four miles southeast of Sonoita on an undeveloped parcel of approximately 40 acres, as well as an alternative 75.76-acre parcel along State Routes 82 and 83. Given the potential long-term effect of this facility on the surrounding community, Santa Cruz County requests that the Environmental Assessment provide clear and detailed information regarding the following:

1. Site Selection Process

Disclosure of the criteria and analysis used to identify and select the proposed 40-acre site and the alternative 75.76-acre site. The EA should explain what other locations were considered, why they were eliminated, how the two remaining locations compare, and what factors ultimately determine CBP's preferred location.

2. Economic Impacts

The EA should evaluate both positive and negative economic impacts associated with each location, including impacts on nearby businesses, property values, tourism, development potential, transportation corridors, public infrastructure, and the overall economic character of the Sonoita area.

3. Social and Community Impacts

An evaluation of how the proposed station may affect nearby residents, property owners, businesses, visitors, and the broader community. This should include potential changes in traffic, noise, lighting, public safety activity, quality of life, community character, and perceptions associated with the presence of a large federal enforcement facility.

4. Visual Impacts

Sonoita and the surrounding area are characterized by significant open space, scenic views, rural character, and viewsheds that contribute to the identity and economic value of the area. The EA should analyze the visual impact of the facility from SR 82, SR 83, neighboring properties, and other publicly accessible locations.

I request that CBP provide site plans, building elevations, photographs, renderings, or visual simulations showing what the proposed facility would look like from surrounding roadways and properties. These materials should show anticipated buildings, fencing, lighting, parking areas, communication equipment, security infrastructure, signage, and other major site features.

5. Air Quality and Construction Impacts

The EA should evaluate temporary and long-term air-quality impacts, including dust and particulate matter generated during construction, construction-equipment emissions, increased employee and operational vehicle traffic, idling vehicles, and any other ongoing sources of emissions associated with the facility.

6. Community Engagement

I request that CBP clearly identify how it intends to engage residents, property owners, businesses, local organizations, and other stakeholders in the Sonoita area throughout the environmental review and site-selection process. Meaningful local engagement should occur before a final site decision is made and should provide the community with sufficient information to understand the proposal, ask questions, identify concerns, and review potential impacts.

7. Comparison of the Two Locations

I request a side-by-side comparison of the proposed and alternative locations addressing environmental, economic, social, visual, traffic, infrastructure, and community impacts. This comparison is important so that the County and the public can understand the advantages and disadvantages of each location before a final decision is made.

CBP has specifically requested local input regarding potential environmental effects and state and local considerations associated with project siting, construction, and operation. Meaningful public review requires sufficient information not only about the environmental impacts of the project, but also why a particular location is being selected, what the completed facility will look like, and how the local community will be engaged before a final decision is made.

I respectfully request that these issues be fully addressed and disclosed as part of the Environmental Assessment and the subsequent public review process.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'John Fanning', with a stylized flourish extending to the right.

John Fanning, Chairman
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors