



# NEWS RELEASE

Arizona House of Representatives

Representative David Cook (R-7)

1700 West Washington • Phoenix, Arizona • 85007

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Thursday, May 9, 2024

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## House Transportation Chairman David Cook Urges ADOT to Prioritize State Route 88 Improvements

**STATE CAPITOL, PHOENIX** – State Representative David Cook, Chairman of the House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, sent a letter today to Jennifer Toth, Director of the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), asking for the inclusion of improvements to State Route 88, the historic Apache Trail, in ADOT’s 5-year plan.

**“As Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, I want to express my willingness to do what is necessary to finish this project and get it included in the Department’s plan,”** Chairman Cook wrote in his letter. **“It is critical for the local area and the state that we get this project finished for the benefit of all Arizonans.”**

Chairman Cook is a longstanding advocate for reopening and improving the section of SR 88 from Fish Creek Hill Overlook/Rest Area (milepost 222) to milepost 229. This segment has been closed since 2019 due to damage caused by the Woodbury Fire and subsequent flooding from Tropical Storm Lorena. SR 88 plays an important role in providing access to Arizona’s natural attractions, including Canyon Lake, Apache Lake, and Tonto National Monument. Cook [recently expressed](#) his strong support for FY25 Community Project Funding to reopen SR 88 and reaffirmed his commitment to ensuring the project is completed successfully.

Chairman Cook’s letter 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

May 9, 2024

Jennifer Toth  
Director, Arizona Department of Transportation  
205 S. 17<sup>th</sup> Ave. MD 100A  
Phoenix, AZ 85007

### **RE: Support for including improvements to State Route 88 in the 5-year plan**

Director Toth,

I wish to express my support for improving State Route (SR) 88 (Apache Trail) from Fish Creek Hill Overlook/Rest Area (milepost 222) to milepost 229 and making sure the project is included in the Department's 5-year plan. This stretch of road has been closed for years, and it must be made a priority to not only open the road but improve it so that business and tourism can thrive.

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 from milepost 222 to milepost 227 near Reavis Trailhead Road remains closed for public safety reasons. SR 88 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. I appreciate the work that advocates for the route's reopening, such as Apache Trail businesses, motorized access enthusiasts, and elected officials, have done. Once the road reopens, we must continue to work to improve it, which is why this project must be included in ADOT's 5-year plan.

Earlier this year, I wrote to Congressman Greg Stanton to express my support for FY25 Community Project Funding (CPF) to reopen SR 88. This funding will go a long way toward opening this portion of the highway, but there is more that we need to do.

As Chairman of the House Transportation Committee, I want to express my willingness to do what is necessary to finish this project and include it in the Department's plan. It is critical for the local area and the state to finish this project for the benefit of all Arizonans.

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