**The History of the Northern Corridor Highway**

1970-1990

The “ring-road” concept, and its Northern Corridor segment, starts taking shape in the midst of rapid population growth, supporting “sprawl” development and use of “wasted” public land.

1995 HCP

Washington County is denied a provision for the highway in the Habitat Conservation Plan, in which the county agreed to establish the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve as a protected area for the “listed” Mojave desert tortoise in the BLM-managed public lands north of St George, in exchange for enabling development throughout the county without further environmental impact studies, on the basis that the highway would be inconsistent with the habitat protection.

2006-2009 Public Lands Bills in Congress

Washington County is denied a provision for the highway in the [2006 Washington County Growth and Conservation Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/senate-bill/3636). Negotiations results in section 1974 of the [2009 Omnibus Public Lands Management Act](https://www.congress.gov/bill/111th-congress/house-bill/146), which established the Red Cliffs National Conservation Area as permanent protection overlaying the Red Cliffs Desert Reserve. The act provided that a traffic solution somewhere in the county be explored, and required that any development in the NCA be for the purposes of conserving the habitat.

2016 Red Cliffs National Conservation Area Resource Management Plan (RMP)

Washington County is denied a provision in the RMP to allow the highway on the basis that it would be inconsistent with the habitat protection. The county filed an appeal of that decision with the Interior Board of Lands Appeals (a court within the Department of Interior). The appeal was denied on the basis that the highway was not permitted under law.

2017-2020 Various Acts of Congress ([HR 7815](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/116/hr7815), [S 3297](https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/senate-bill/3297/text?q=%7B%22search%22%3A%5B%22s+3297%22%5D%7D&r=1), [HR 2423](https://www.govtrack.us/congress/bills/115/hr2423/text))

Utah Representative Chris Stewart and Senator Mike Lee introduced bills approving the highway. After testimony and discussions with CSU and its Coalition, none made it out of committee, as they were deemed too controversial and contrary to other existing laws.

2019-2021 Trump Department of Interior Action

The county initiated the National Environmental Policy Act process through the Department of Interior (DOI) to determine if a highway was consistent with existing laws and purposes of the Red Cliffs NCA. On January 15, 2021, the decision to approve the highway was recorded in the [Federal Registry](https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2021/01/15/2021-00652/notice-of-availability-of-the-records-of-decision-for-a-highway-right-of-way-amended-habitat).

2021 Reversal of the DOI Decision

CSU and its Red Cliffs Conservation Coalition of regional and national conservation organizations exercise remedies to the decision in the Biden Administration, the 117th Congress and federal court and the basis that the Environmental Impact Statement conclusions were not justified and that several bedrock environmental laws were broken by the DOI in approving the highway.