

March 19, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally express my opposition to the proposed railway route crossing over Sulphur Creek, which runs through my property. This section of the creek is not only a vital waterway but also serves as an essential breeding habitat for bass, including the Guadalupe Bass (*Micropterus treculii*)—the official state fish of Texas.

The Guadalupe Bass is classified as Near Threatened by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and is the focus of ongoing conservation efforts by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). This species thrives in clean, free-flowing streams with stable ecosystems, making Sulphur Creek's habitat particularly sensitive. The construction and operation of a railway over this area would have severe and lasting consequences, including:

- **Disruption of Breeding and Spawning Cycles:** Increased noise, vibration, and water contamination from construction runoff and sediment displacement would significantly degrade the creek's water quality. This could directly impact the spawning success of the Guadalupe Bass, threatening its already vulnerable population.
- **Erosion and Habitat Degradation:** Railway construction near aquatic ecosystems often leads to soil erosion and increased turbidity, smothering spawning beds and reducing oxygen levels. This would jeopardize the bass's habitat viability.
- **Potential for Chemical Contamination:** The transport of quarry materials poses a risk of chemical leaks or spills, which could introduce harmful substances into Sulphur Creek, endangering aquatic life.

Given the ecological significance of Sulphur Creek and its role in supporting the Guadalupe Bass population, the proposed railway route would undoubtedly place this species—and the entire aquatic ecosystem—at risk. Furthermore, the degradation of this natural habitat would be inconsistent with Texas's commitment to preserving its state fish and maintaining its ecological heritage.

I urge the Surface Transportation Board (STB) and all relevant regulatory agencies to consider the environmental ramifications of this railway proposal. A thorough environmental impact assessment, including a habitat and species survey, should be conducted to evaluate the risks posed to the Guadalupe Bass and other wildlife dependent on Sulphur Creek.

For the preservation of our natural resources and the protection of Texas's official state fish, I respectfully request that the proposed railway route be reconsidered or rerouted away from Sulphur Creek.

Sincerely,
Kristen Cannon