



ELLEN TROXCLAIR

TEXAS STATE REPRESENTATIVE • DISTRICT 19

March 24, 2025

Mr. Adam Assenza
Office of Environmental Impacts, Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423
RE: Docket FB-36815

To Mr. Assenza:

On behalf of the residents of Burnet County, whom I represent within Texas House District 19, thank you for the opportunity to provide comment to aid your office in determining which level of environmental review to proceed with, in regards to the application by Texas Materials Group to construct a railroad line.

The area of Texas' world-renowned Hill Country where this line is proposed contains numerous families, small businesses, small waterways, rare animal species, unique plant life, archeological & historical treasures, well-used parks & preserves, scenic country roads, and other resources. There are too many possible environmental impacts to list in particular, and we therefore request the highest-possible level of environmental review your office may provide. The further context of long-term drought, population explosion, wildfire risk, and impacts of noise or other types of pollution on people and animals in the area further elevate the concerns.

I request that this office participate in the site visit when that occurs, that this and any future public comment period be extended to the fullest permissible length, and further that a public hearing be held for residents to provide comment.

My understanding is that the environmental review, due to the strictly limited presumption in law at the federal level that freight transport is in the public interest, may result in your office's legally delimited recommendation to proceed with such projects. I therefore ask that you recommend to the Board in your report the longest possible environmental review, any possible mitigation conceivable, and that every constituent requested accommodation, that may reasonably exist, be granted.

We realize there is a separate process that will weigh this project on the transportation merits, and we look forward to contributing to that, should the applicant proceed to filing. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Ellen Troxclair
State Representative, House District 19

From: [Catherine Van Arnam](#)
To: [Assenza, Adam](#)
Cc: [Higgins, Michael](#)
Subject: RE: Hello from the Office of Texas State Rep. Ellen Troxclair
Date: Monday, March 24, 2025 12:49:14 PM
Attachments: [STB Burnet Troxclair Enviro Letter 2025.pdf](#)

Some people who received this message don't often get email from catherine.vanarnam@house.texas.gov. [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello gentlemen, and thank you both again for your extensive time on the phone with me to help this office understand both the environmental side and transportation merit side of this process.

Attached is the letter Rep. Troxclair has submitted through the portal for your office's consideration Adam, to help determine level of environmental review, and we look forward to further opportunity for her to speak on behalf of her constituents in Burnet County.

Gratefully,

Catherine Van Arnam | *Communications Director*
State Representative Ellen Troxclair | *HD 19*
Room E1.322 | (512) 463-0490

From: Catherine Van Arnam
Sent: Wednesday, March 19, 2025 2:21 PM
To: adam.Assenza@stb.gov
Cc: michael.higgins@stb.gov
Subject: RE: Hello from the Office of Texas State Rep. Ellen Troxclair

Hello Adam, just following up on my call regarding the attached letter, and looping in Mr. Higgins here, who got the attached email from us yesterday. Our questions to you both in addition to the below is to verify two things.

First, the word in Burnet County that the *public* is welcomed to submit comment on environmental impact at this juncture, and I wanted to ask if their comments will be considered, and if they will be set aside at this point in the process, if there is another point in this process that the public may have an impact on the decision, whether their perspective is environmental or otherwise. Here is the information being shared:

Submit personal statements to the Surface Transportation Board by April 3rd! Click link below for the submission form. Docket # FD 36815 Project Name - Texas Materials Group, Inc.
<https://www.stb.gov/proceedings-actions/e-filing/environmental-comments/>

The second question is regarding this office's upcoming letter to communicate any comment or concerns that Representative Troxclair has on behalf of her constituents. We are grateful for that opportunity. To assist her in determining the appropriate

scope and level of the environmental review for this project and to prepare for this response, *we would like to know as much as possible about this proposal*, beyond what this letter communicates. And also to assist our understanding of what is proposed and the process going forward. Is it a correct assumption that the 14.4 miles of new rail line is not a current right of way? The 12.5 miles of right of way of a former rail line (last used when?), we have heard that ownership of some of those parcels was sold from the former line to the current property owners. So we are unclear even if we are facing an eminent domain possibility or the use of existing right of way that is fully owned by the Texas Materials group.

We appreciate your time and look forward to hearing back.

Gratefully,

Catherine Van Arnam | *Communications Director*
State Representative Ellen Troxclair | *HD 19*
Room E1.322 | (512) 463-0490

From: Catherine Van Arnam

Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2025 1:19 PM

To: michael.higgins@stb.gov

Subject: Hello from the Office of Texas State Rep. Ellen Troxclair

Hello Mr. Higgins, thank you for your time on the phone, We have been hearing about this potential project from our District Liaison and local officials for a few weeks now, and are hopeful to gain clarity directly from your agency, about the process.

We would like to learn how residents, local officials, and the Representative, may contribute to the decision to permit or not permit Texas Materials to reconstruct the Southern Pacific Lampasas Branch between Lampasas, TX and Burnet, TX, which has been abandoned since the 1960s, for transporting aggregate materials between quarries. This is a 29.6 miles line that would require 14.4 miles of new track.

- Do you have a document or way we may be briefed on the request that Texas Materials has submitted, and how that request is processed by your agency.
- We understand that the Surface Transportation Board's Office of Environmental Analysis is accepting comments "from local agencies," until April 3rd. We are wondering if that group could include the State Representative?
- Also wondering if there is a way the public may contribute to this decision and find out more about what is involved in the process of approval over time. Specifically, where residents, the County officials may have opportunity to contribute.

- We have heard that there are several routes being considered, and would like to know if that's true as well.

I have your direct line as 202-245-0284.

Gratefully.

Catherine Van Arnam | *Communications Director*
State Representative Ellen Troxclair | *HD 19*
Room E1.322 | (512) 463-0490