

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my firm opposition to the proposed Texas Materials rail line through Burnet County, Texas, particularly as it pertains to the impact on my family's land, which has been privately owned and carefully stewarded for over a century. This project poses a significant threat to the livelihood of ranchers, the preservation of critical wildlife habitats, and the overall enjoyment and value of private land. The disruption it would bring is unacceptable, and I urge you to reconsider its path and broader implications.

Our ranch has supported the Texas tradition of cattle ranching and beef production for generations, and the construction and ongoing operation of a rail line will disrupt essential ranching activities. The presence of a railroad will cut through pastures, limiting grazing land and making it more difficult to manage livestock movement and pasture rotation. The risk of accidents involving cattle, along with increased stress from constant noise and vibrations, will significantly impact herd health and overall productivity. Additionally, the project will result in the destruction of carefully maintained fencing, water sources, and access roads, creating logistical nightmares for ranchers who rely on these essential infrastructures to run their operations effectively.

The proposed rail line would also have a devastating impact on the fragile ecosystem in Burnet County, particularly on endangered and protected species such as the golden-cheeked warbler, black-capped vireo and the red-tailed hawk; not to mention the numerous other wildlife species. Our land provides an essential habitat for these birds, offering the dense oak and juniper woodlands necessary for nesting and survival. Fragmenting these habitats with a rail line could push already vulnerable species further toward decline. Additionally, increased noise pollution, wildfires sparked by rail operations and human activity will disrupt natural behaviors, driving many species away from their nesting and hunting grounds. Preserving these habitats is not only a moral obligation but also an essential duty under federal and state conservation laws.

One of the greatest joys of land ownership is the ability to appreciate its beauty, tranquility, and history. This proposed rail line threatens to strip landowners of that privilege. The increased noise from train operations, including blaring horns and ground-shaking vibrations, will drastically reduce the peaceful environment we have enjoyed for generations. For those of us who use our land for recreation, hunting, and relaxation, the presence of a railroad will forever diminish our connection to our property.

Furthermore, the presence of a rail line will lead to a significant decline in land values. Prospective buyers are far less likely to invest in land bisected by industrial infrastructure, leading to reduced resale values and financial losses for landowners. This is an unfair burden placed upon those who have spent their lives preserving and caring for their property.

I strongly urge decision-makers to reconsider the devastating impact this proposed rail line will have on landowners, ranching operations, and the local environment. There are alternate solutions that do not sacrifice the livelihoods and heritage of families who have cared for this land for generations. Please take our concerns seriously and work toward a more responsible approach that respects both private property rights and environmental conservation.

Sincerely,

Mark Bishop