

Mr. Adam Assenza
 Office of Environmental Assessment, Project Manager
 Surface Transportation Board
 395 E Street, SW
 Washington, DC 20423

April 14, 2025

Re: Docket No. FD 36815, Texas Materials Group, Inc – Formal *Opposition* comments for proposed railway between Burnet and Lampasas Counties, Texas

Dear Mr. Assenza and Members of the Surface Transportation Board,

I am Tracy Snell Mack, Trustee of the M.A. Snell Investments Trust, and am writing to you to formally and adamantly oppose Texas Materials Group's proposed railway between Burnet County and Lampasas County. The Trust respectfully requests the STB to conduct a full regulatory Environmental Assessment to the fullest extent possible. We also request that the environmental, archaeological, and historical findings be precisely conducted with integrity and its findings presented.

Our Sulphur Creek properties in Lampasas County, est. 1901, and Mesquite Creek properties in Burnet County, est. 1849, have been solely owned, ranched, and preserved by the Snell/Alexander family and their descendants for 8 generations. Each of our three properties would be affected by this proposed railway. These are legacy ranches intended to continue being kept in ecologically sound condition for family heirs and future generations. Our properties are not for sale or acquisition for any amount, at any time.

The Snell Legacy ranches are rare tracts of environmentally sensitive property that is uniquely irreplaceable if altered or lost. This project would have severe environmental impacts on biodiversity, water quality, wildlife, livestock, vital ecosystems, and on the landowner's livelihoods and quality of life of its affected communities.

Snell Ranches Areas of Concern

Lampasas County

- Railway is proposed roughly 890 feet from current homestead
- Railway would directly impact Sulphur Creek, and its riparian area along the creek, the Guadalupe Bass breeding habitat that exists along these banks, as well as the large century old trees that occur along Sulphur creek that are not replaceable in a life time
- Former 1800s farmhouse remnants
- Thornal Cemetery, dated 1901, containing (2) sites, noted by the Texas Historic Commission, is roughly 52 feet from proposed railway
- Railway would divide 1/3 of Bermuda field used for hay cultivation and cattle grazing with no means to access other side of this ranch

Burnet County

- 1-d-1 Wildlife Exempt maintained properties

- ‘The Bottom’ forest area habitat to variety of birds, deer and other wildlife
- Historic Scott Hollow
- Mesquite Creek, Scott Stream, Dripping Springs and other seasonal streams, springs, water sources
- 2 large water recharge areas
- Campsite for leased hunters and family recreation is roughly 730 feet from proposed route

General Causes for Concern

- Risk of derailment, fires, and hazardous material spills and consequences
- Effects on all species of wildlife, plants, aquatic life and water systems
- Economic impact to ranches and the community
- Historical structures and areas of significance
- Archeologic artifacts and areas of significance
- Landowner rights and quality of life
- Emergency services delays and inaccessibility
- Irreparable damage to the unique ecosystem and landscape of the Texas Hill Country

Conclusion

The M.A. Snell Investments Trust respectfully requests that the STB deny Texas Materials Group’s request for approval for the full 26.9-mile Burnet and Lampasas County proposed railway. If unable to deny the proposal, we request the STB coordinate with all regulatory affiliates to conduct full extensive review, analysis and studies on the entire route and that all findings be meticulously considered and presented before proceeding with a decision.

Respectfully,
Tracy Snell Mack, Trustee

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Kristen Cannon, Future Successor Trustee

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