



**Southwest Gulf RR**

Diana Wood to: afitzgerald100

Bcc: Diana Wood

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HED-2644

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

In response to your questions regarding the above referenced rail line construction project, please note that STB's 2008 approval allows SGR to construct and operate its rail line along any of the three approved environmentally preferred routes, subject to the terms of the Programmatic Agreement (PA) and 80 additional environmental mitigation measures. Accordingly, SGR has informed STB that it intends to construct the Modified Eastern Bypass Route.

STB has re-initiated the Section 106 consultation process with the Texas State Historic Preservation, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and SGR only because the original PA expired and we need to develop a new document. Instead of discussing the numerous routes studied during the lengthy and completed environmental review process, the new PA will focus on the Modified Eastern Bypass Route. And although the stipulations will be similar to the expired PA, they will be more specific to the chosen route and the steps that SGR needs to take to identify, and then to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential adverse effects to any historic and cultural resources that may be encountered during rail line construction. This includes potential impacts to the Upper Quihi Historic District.

It is important to note that we are not re-initiating the environmental review process and will not be conducting any public meetings. STB approved the environmental documents in 2008 and concurrently issued SGR a license to construct and operate a line of railroad as a common carrier. This approval remains in effect today. Again, our actions here involve the re-initiation of the Section 106 consultation process as required by the National Historic Preservation Act. We are inviting any potentially interested parties that may have physical, economic, educational or ancestral connections to this area, including those with knowledge of properties of traditional religious and cultural significance, to participate in this process. SGR will then prepare a scope of work that specifies how it will address the new PA requirements in the field during construction. So, please let me know if you would like to participate in the development of the new PA as a concurring party by September 18, 2015.

Sincerely,

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