

#E1-2791
RQJ



January 18, 2007

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Surface Transportation Board

Case Control Unit

Washington, DC 20423

Attention: Rini Ghosh

RE: Finance Docket #64348

Proposed Rail Line for Medina County Texas

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

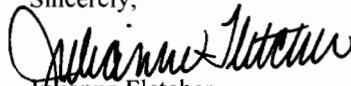
It is with great joy that I read the December 2006 Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the Surface Transportation Board. Kudos are due to the Section of Environmental Analysis for conducting additional research and fieldwork to consider additional rail routes for the Vulcan Construction Material's project.

As a representative of Preservation Texas, I testified at a hearing in Hondo in February, 2006, regarding the historic resources of the rural Quihi setting. Preservation Texas named Quihi to its Texas' Most Endangered Places List in 2006 because of the threat a truck route or a rail line posed to the historic houses, structures, and farmsteads in its path. The area was intriguing to PT because of the relatively unchanged rural area with remnants from this unique settlement of Germanic/Alsatian-style stone homes and ruins. We saw only the four proposed routes in February and were concerned because all of them looked invasive. It was heartening to read in the December 2006 report that the newly examined Eastern Alternatives appear to have fewer cultural resource impacts than the original four rail routes studied.

The MDEAA Medina Dam Alternative route extending due east from the proposed quarry site before turning south near the intersection of County Road 354 and County Road 265 is a viable option. Though the length of this route is longer than the Proposed Route, the Alternative I, Alternative II, Alternative III, and Eastern Bypass Route, it offers more protection to the National Register eligible resources. Historic resources are not something you can replace as you can replant a young tree to replace an old one. These resources tell the story of how Quihi came to be and no photographs in a book or words on a page can tell the story like the actual site.

Preservation Texas supports the choice of the Medina Dam Alternative route because it crosses fewer floodplains and has the least negative impact on historic resources and the broader landscape of the rural historic districts.

Sincerely,


Julianne Fletcher
Executive Director

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