

#E1-2709
RG

Bret Bigelow

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received
1/29/07

Surface Transportation Board

January 19, 2007

Rini Ghosh

Section of Environmental Analysis

1925 K Street NW

Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Finance Docket #34284

Vulcan Materials Co./Southwest Gulf Railroad

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

I am writing to express my opposition to the construction of a quarry in the vicinity of Quihi, Texas. I am concerned about the environmental impact on the aquifer which lies just beneath the proposed quarry. This aquifer supplies water to much of the population of South Texas, and we cannot afford to jeopardize another of our dwindling sources of clean water. Additionally, the area north of Dunlay towards the proposed aquifer is prone to flooding and the construction of a railroad spur through that area would cause a worsening of the flooding of roads, fields and residences.

I feel very strongly about the importance of preserving the historic farms and houses that give the Quihi area its unique, irreplaceable character. I teach United States History in an area just east of Quihi and have been increasingly disheartened to see the results of increased development on the heritage homes, trees, and tranquility of that region. In the specific case of Quihi, several of the proposed railroad routes would wipe many of these historic places off the map and destroy a legacy that dates back well beyond the first European settlement in the mid 1800's. I understand the importance of economic growth to employment, but preservation and environmental measures taken are rarely sufficient. The loss of local heritage is not only felt by those such as myself who truly care about local history; many of my students feel helpless as their local environment becomes increasingly anonymous and subdivided by housing, big-box stores, and the resources such as quarries, rail, and roads that fuel that development and unchecked growth.

On a personal note, my ranch is located just north of County Road 252, and the noise and air pollution caused by a large quarry would adversely affect my life in many ways. I have spent many

weekends there enjoying the peace and solitude of that region and cannot imagine the impact on myself and other landowners who would have to put up with noise, air pollution, drainage issues, and drastically increased truck traffic kicking as much road dust as the quarry itself.

I urge you to help me preserve this unique pastoral area of Medina County, Texas by refusing to grant permission for a railroad spur to the site of Vulcan's proposed quarry. If you must grant permission, I urge you to choose the Medina Dam Alternative Route approved by MCEAA or else the Eastern Bypass Route. I also urge that the proposed fuel storage and maintenance area be moved further south, out of the Elm Creek floodplain.

Thank you very much for your help on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Bret Bigelow", with a stylized, cursive script.

Bret Bigelow