

#E1-2723
RJI

Finance Docket No. 34284

January 15, 2007

Sylvia Greer
496 CR 253
Mico, TX 78056

Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Attention: Rini Ghosh
Fax No. (202) 565-9000

*received
1/29/07*

Re: STB Docket No. 34284, Southwestern Gulf Railroad Company Construction and Operation Exemption – Medina County, Texas

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My wife and I have been residents of the Medina County since April of 2000. Our residence is located about ½ mile north of the proposed quarry site and have concerns about the proposed rail line and quarry.

Thank you for considering the following issues regarding the permitting of the SGR routes for the proposed Vulcan Quarry Site.

In reviewing the DEIS, we feel the only viable railway routes to be considered for permitting are the Eastern By-Pass Route and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative route shown on figure 1 – FD 34284 of the study. The eastern routes would impose the least impact on the Elm Creek flood plain and the historical and archeological sites, however, please consider the following issues pertaining the eastern routes as part of your permitting process:

1. Require the SGR to provide grade elevated overpasses across FM 2676 and CR 265 to prevent traffic delays and accidents and assure access for emergency vehicles.
2. Require the SGR to improve the existing roads that would be utilized for local trucking to include FM 2676 and County Roads 351, 353, 354, and 4516. The permitting should require SGR to pay for the cost of improving these roads prior to quarry operation. We do not feel it is right for the tax payers to bear the cost of repairing and maintaining roads damaged by trucks hauling heavy materials for profit at the tax payers expense.
3. Require SGR to provide assurance that road improvements provided to meet the needs of the quarry will not restrict or impair the traffic patterns of local residents.
4. Require the SGR to locate the diesel fuel storage facility further south away from the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone and away from the Elm Creek Flood Plain. Locating the fuel storage facility further south would decrease the environmental impact.
5. Require the SGR and Vulcan to cover materials transported by rail cars and trucks to decrease the amount of local dust.

Although water consumption and environmental impact issues are not directly under the jurisdiction of the STB, we feel they should be considered as part of the permitting process. Issued to be considered are as follows:

Water Consumption: Although water consumption is not the major issue with permitting the SGR railroad, the proposed quarry will have a socio-impact on the local water supply. Medina County is an agricultural and residential community with an already diminishing water supply. Some of our local water wells have recently been abandoned due to insufficient flow. This could be attributed to the recent drought and the reduced surface water supply from Medina Lake imposed by the BexarMet Water District. Table L.3 of the Region L water needs report prepared by the Texas Water Development Board shows the total water need for Medina County in 2010 to be 6,818 acre-feet per year and 6,411 acre-feet projected for 2060. Projected Irrigation need was projected at 4,651 acre-feet per year (68% of total county need. The report does not include any projection for 6,000 acre feet per year ground water to operate the quarry. In a letter dated October 12, 2006, from SGR's attorney, it was revealed that Vulcan may choose to purchase additional future water rights that would not increase the amount of drawn from the Edwards Aquifer. This indicates that Vulcan plans to use more water than their existing water rights. We assume the additional water rights will be drawn from the underground Trinity reservoir and Cow Creek. The 6,000 acre feet per year drawn from the water sources will further impact our future water supply.

Environmental Impact: My wife and I choose Medina County as tranquil natural habitat in the hill country to build our retirement home. Much of the value of our homestead is attributed to the tranquility and beauty of the natural habitat that surrounds our property. Why should SGR and Vulcan be permitted to profit by the destruction of this beautiful habitat?

Eminent Domain Condemnation: We are concerned about having our properties condemned by SGR through eminent domain to support the present and future needs of the railroad and the (roads, power lines, water mains, etc.).

Sincerely,



Sylvia Greer

cc: Congressman – Cerio Rodriquez
Medina County Judge Jim Barden