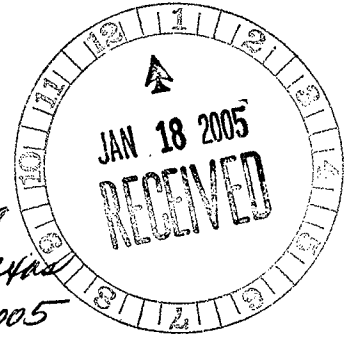


EI-1325



P.O. Box 369
Castroville, Texas
January 8, 2005

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

Attention: Rini Ghosh
STB Docket No. FD 34284

Dear Mr. Ghosh and Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

Three minutes. Three minutes at a public hearing to express one's concerns about the long term effects of the proposed Vulcan Materials Quarry and Southwest Gulf Railroad Line ---- Three minutes isn't quite enough time to relate how my life and the lives of Quihi residents and others will be changed forever, so thank you for "listening" to me a bit longer.

I am a landowner and a homeowner near the proposed quarry site. My property could very well bear a "Heritage Ranch" marker for three generations have loved and worked this land along the Elm Creek directly north and west of the Herdes Family Heritage Ranch.

Over the past one hundred years, each generation has raised livestock on the brushy portion and a variety crops in the small arable part in the east. We have risen with the sunrise and worked until dusk. Like the Native Americans who preceded us, we have appreciated the beauty of the flora and fauna around us. We have prayed for more rain during droughts and watched in awe as floods have taken fences and surrounded and entered others' homes. Some of us have leased our land for hunting and other purposes, or we have sought other jobs to help us survive during bleak times. We've mended fences and remained grateful that the rains have replenished stock tanks with water for our cattle and for the livestock that abounds. We have begun again; we have continued. Farming and ranching has been our way of life — a rewarding way of life!

Now we find our way of life threatened. The pristine beauty of this area of Medina County could be marred by a quarry, by dirt and dust, creating health problems for many. The peace and quiet that has been ours would be replaced by the sounds of rock crushers and by trucks and railroad cars transporting limestone. Will our livestock be able to hear our call above the din? Will we still hear the snort of a deer or marvel at the flight of a covey of quail or a flock of turkeys?

The building of a railroad track will change the flow of water following the rains. These drainage changes will result in additional flooding and/or the elimination of Tanks that have provided water for livestock and wildlife. I am concerned about the safety of the underground water also. How will the quarry/railroad and its use of huge amounts of water effect the level and the quality of the water in the wells of my neighbors in the Guadalupe area now and in the future? in other areas of the Edwards Aquifer? How will the next three generations have their needs for a safe water supply met?

I am concerned about the safety of Travelers — children riding school buses, farmers slowly moving equipment and produce, wage earners making their daily journey to/from San Antonio and elsewhere, hunters using the roads to go their leases. There have been several deadly accidents in recent years caused by large trucks, and there have been six mishaps involving trains in the San Antonio area in the past six months.

My concern also extends to the damage that historic sites and buildings might incur as a result of the quarry/railroad. Many of these buildings have been in existence since the 1850's when the first European settlers arrived with Henri Castro's Colonists. Can these structures survive?

These are some of my concerns. Thank you for "listening" to my concerns for an additional three minutes.

Sincerely,
Norm L. Winkler