

#E1-980
R21



August 31, 2004

Hon. Hope Andrade
Commissioner
Texas Transportation Commission
125 E. 11th Street
Austin, Texas 78701-2483

Re: Medina County Project

Dear Commissioner Andrade:

It has recently come to my attention that the Medina County Environmental Action Association, Inc. ("MCEAA") wrote to you on July 11, 2004 concerning the plans for the crossing of FM 2676 by a new rail line that has been proposed for Medina County by Southwest Gulf Railroad, a wholly owned subsidiary of Vulcan Materials Company. I wanted to take this opportunity to briefly respond to MCEAA's letter.

MCEAA, a group composed of some landowners in the relevant area, is actively opposed to the SGR line and to the development of a quarry in Medina County that would be served by that rail line. Its comments on the crossing matter, and specifically its call for the construction of a grade separation between the SGR line and FM 2676, should be viewed in that context. SGR, like its parent company, is fully committed to safety as its primary concern and believes that the at-grade crossing and associated crossing protections that it has proposed will fully protect the public's interest in safe transportation. As you are aware, we have consulted at length with the TexDOT staff on this matter and supplied detailed information that the Department has requested concerning the SGR line and the grade crossing issue. We believe that the relevant facts here -- particularly the very light traffic level on FM 2676 and the planned operation of no more than two round trip trains per day by SGR in the foreseeable future -- will support a decision by TexDOT to enter an agreement with SGR allowing an at-grade crossing that is protected by appropriate warning devices, as SGR has proposed. Further, SGR recognizes that TexDOT would retain discretion to determine at some future stage that a grade separation should be constructed at the crossing point should circumstances so warrant.

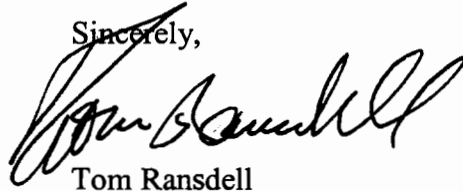
As you know, the federal Surface Transportation Board is currently considering SGR's request to build its rail line. The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis is now working toward issuance of a

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Draft Environmental Impact Statement ("DEIS") which will, among other issues, assess the impacts of the proposed SGR line on highway transportation and safety. MCEAA and others have had a full opportunity to make their views known to the Board, and will have ample opportunity to comment on the DEIS. We look forward to further consulting with you and the staff of TexDOT further after the Board process has been completed with a view toward reaching an appropriate agreement concerning the crossing FM 2676.

Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Ransdell", written over the word "Sincerely,".

Tom Ransdell

cc: Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Senator John Cornyn
Congressman Henry Bonilla
Senator Frank Madla
Senator Troy Fraser
David B. Casteel, P.E.
Carlos A. Lopez, P.E.
Victoria Rutson, Chief SEA, Surface Transportation Board