

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423
Attn: Diana Wood, Section of Environmental Analysis

November 8, 2007

HEI-3232
FD 34284
Received 11/19/07

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34284, Southwest Gulf Company Construction and Operation Exemption-Medina County, TX; Notice of Availability and Request For Public Review and Comment on a Draft Programmatic Agreement

Dear Ms. Wood:

Our family has direct ancestral ties to the early European settlers to the Quihi area through the Balzen and Schweers families. Our home is located at 776 County Road 354, and is a farm property registered in the Texas Land Heritage Program that honors our farm founded in 1881. As stated on the heritage certificate, "To the dedication and perseverance of the founders and heirs of these lands, we owe the basic wealth of Texas".

My family recognizes and appreciates the long diligent research and studies done by the STB Section of Environmental Analysis. We can see the efforts that were often needed by STB to follow many misleading and erroneous statements by Vulcan SGR on their application and on letters from their representatives regarding the proposed railroad. The STB's complete and prompt correspondence, plus their website, helped to educate us and inform us on the overall application procedure. It also insured us a voice to minimize impacts to the rural historic landscapes of Quihi.

An established connection between the two historical districts of Quihi is strong and real. These two areas are united as one by family ties to school, church, and burials. These ties are easily confirmed by two Quihi cemeteries and their markers.

As with any land settlement, potable water is a paramount requirement. Water supply is needed for humans, stock, and crops. In this historical landscape, hand-dug wells, windmills, ponds, cisterns, springs, and old deep wells should be cataloged for evaluation of landscapes.

As the SGR construction is in a known flash flood area on the Balcones escarpment and, as the railroads will be elevated above existing terrain, flood analysis and studies should be performed on all low-lying historical sites and structures for protection of potential adverse effects. It must be realized that natural drainage will be altered with berms plus drains.

Small Indian artifacts have been uncovered from our farm area. We believe that the artifacts were directly connected to a natural 1-2 acre natural water pond near the east end of our property. Following the east fence line in this same area is the Sturm lane

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(described in deeds) that was used to move livestock in this area. These areas should be included in field studies.

The 2,000 foot path of the railroad could affect all the above areas and should be evaluated in field studies for potential adverse effects. We will gladly give open access to our property for any field studies and may be contacted for added details and information.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lester R. Landrum".

Lester R. Landrum
776 CR 354
Quihi, TX 78861
(830)426-8295