



TEXAS
HISTORICAL
COMMISSION

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

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F. LAWERENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

January 19, 2007

Ms. Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, DC 20403
STB Finance Docket No. 34284

received
1/22/07

Re: Project review under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, Review of Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Southwest Gulf Railroad, STB Finance Docket No. 34284, Construction and Operation Exemption, Medina County, Texas (STB)

Dear Ms Ghosh:

This letter serves as comment on the proposed undertaking from the State Historic Preservation Officer, the Executive Director of the Texas Historical Commission.

Our staff has reviewed the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS). We greatly appreciate the Surface Transportation Board's cooperation in undertaking the rural historic landscape study and the careful consideration of alternative routes to potentially lessen the impact on historic resources. In addition to the study's importance for this project, we believe it provides crucial information for future planning in the community and within the region.

Our agency agrees with the findings and conclusions of the SDEIS. We strongly support the utilization of either of the environmentally preferred eastern routes. Both the Eastern Bypass Route and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative significantly lessen the impact of this project on critical historic resources. Both alternatives appear to meet the requirements of the National Historic Preservation Act to avoid or minimize adverse effects to historic properties.

We do offer one caveat regarding the environmentally preferred routes. We hope that the Surface Transportation Board will select whichever of these two routes that will result in the least division of current agricultural lands. We also believe that there may be an opportunity for slight adjustments or realignments to either of these routes to reduce the impacts on farmland operations. We pledge to work with the Surface Transportation Board to make either of these eastern alternative routes as functional as possible for the railroad and the landowners while still protecting the important historic resources of the eligible Upper Quihi Rural Historic District.

Again we appreciate your agency's efforts in the completion of this SDEIS and compliance with federal laws.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "F. Lawrence Oaks", written over a horizontal line.

F. Lawrence Oaks, State Historic Preservation Officer

cc: John Nau, III. Chair, Texas Historical Commission
John Fowler, Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
Albert Hausser, Texas Historical Commission
David H. Coburn, Steptoe & Johnson, LLP.