

FD 34284

#E1-2788

RG

TO: SECTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
ATTENTION: RINI GHOSH

Received
1/31/07

01-25-07

FR: SEAN FENELEY

Southwest Golf Railroad/Vulcan Construction Materials has submitted a petition to build a rail line from a Union Pacific line near Dunlay Texas to a proposed lime stone quarry out side of Quihi Texas. My family and I are opposed to the construction of the rail line and the operation of a quarry at the proposed site. I understand that the Surface Transportation board is only concerned with the rail line but you must also understand that the quarry and the rail line are one and the same. Without one you do not have the other.

There are two residences on my property that is located approximately one quarter of a mile from the proposed quarry site and the area of the site that is to house the rail operations. See attached map and note the highlighted area. Along with the two residences there are also two water wells on the property belonging to the family.

I, along with most of the residence in this area, moved or live here to get away from traffic, noise, poor air quality and the urban environment and now all of that is pending the out come of your study and the decision made by your board.

Your office has outlined areas that will be analyzed in the SDEIS and I will submit our concerns regarding those areas and possibly more.

Transportation in this rural area can be difficult when weather conditions are bad and this will be compounded if any of the proposed rail routes are considered and agreed upon. With the low areas and flood problems there are times when access to vital services such as law enforcement, fire and ambulance are limited or non-existent to residents in this area and trains blocking roadways will add to delays in the arrival of these services. There is also a concern with free travel in the area for farmers and residents attempting to utilize the limited routes we have to travel to towns and markets. Placing any of the proposed routes will alter life styles regarding travel and travel time.

There is also a public safety aspect to a rail line. Inevitably, there will be a fatality at one of the crossings and is the financial benefit to SGR/Vulcan worth the life of anyone? Vulcan material may think so but I can grantee no one in Medina County thinks so. In the recent past, there have been a number of derailments in this area of Texas and I do believe that Union Pacific lines have been involved with most of them. Whom is Vulcan going to contract to build the rail line and will it be of the quality of current rail lines? Increased rail traffic will only increase the chances of more derailments.

As stated above there are two Edwards aquifer water wells on our property. This quarry and rail line will be on the border of the Edwards recharge zone. The make up and characteristics of limestone and the operation of a quarry and the rail operations in that quarry have a great potential to contaminate the wells in the area. Features in limestone allow for water movement and some wells in this area are not very deep. One of the wells on our property hit water at approximately 288 ft. and there are other wells in the area that hit water sooner. It would not take much of a spill from the rail operations area to contaminate the ground water. Vibration from the rail operation not to mention from the

quarry operation could cause formations in the lime stone to shift causing irreparable damage to wells. There is no other source of water for area residents.

Air quality is of concern due to the health reasons. The transfer of limestone to awaiting rail cars will cause a large amount of dust. Vulcan states that they will use a large amount of water to keep the dust down. That merely compounds the water problem. Using a large amount of water to keep dust down will increase the amount of water seeping into the ground and that water will pick up other contaminants and wash them into our only source of water. The placement of the rail operation in the quarry will allow the prevailing winds to carry any thing airborne from the quarry directly toward my house. Air quality was one of the reasons for locating to this area.

The introduction of SGR/Vulcan into this area is going to cause a major disruption to the wildlife in the area. This disruption is also going to alter the ability of landowner to utilize there land in the manner in which most do. Hunting is a major recreation to folks in this area. For some the disruption of the wildlife will be a financial loss due to the continuous noise and operation of a quarry and rail line. This loss will be felt as a result of encroachment onto property by the rail line as well as the noise and vibration and the encroachment will cause the landowner to loose their ability to utilize their land as they wish. Farmers and Ranchers could feel the impact by loss of revenue from divided property or loss of production by stressed livestock.

The residents in Quihi and the surrounding area like to live a quiet and simple life. They enjoy the country life and do not appreciate a large corporation coming into the area and disrupting their lives. When you sit out on your back porch and throw some beef on the fire, you do not want to look out and see a large rock crusher towering over the live oaks. You do not want to have the peace and quiet removed by the sounds of a diesel locomotive and the sounds of a rock crusher and dynamite.

The proposed rail line and quarry is a moneymaker for Vulcan materials and the few landowners whose property the quarry will be on but everyone else in the area will loose. Property values will decrease as well as ability to sell property.

Vulcan Materials is a fortune 500 company and we are citizens of a rural Texas County. Vulcan has the finances and lobbyists to wine you and dine you to help their cause. We however do not have such resources. Your decision in this matter will greatly affect many individuals. A few for the good (Vulcan and quarry landowners) and many for the bad (local residents). This rail line and quarry will have a negative affect on the area for a very long time. You have the ability to stop it and I ask that you consider the thoughts and feelings of all of the residents in the area and make the only right decision and that is to deny SGR/Vulcan the permit to build the rail line.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter.

Respectfully,



Sean Feneley

