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To: Members of the Surface Transportation Board
of the U. S. Department of Transportation
Case Control Unit

Finance Docket No. 34284
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company
Construction and Operation Exemption
Medina County, Texas

January 26, 2007

Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

We thank you for sending us the two volumes of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement which we received recently. The entire contents gives evidence of the thorough manner in which your board investigated and commented on every aspect of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's proposed plan for construction of a rail line in Medina County, Texas.

We have followed closely the project originated by Vulcan Materials and Mining which proposes to operate a quarry in the rural area north of Quihi, Texas. It is our opinion that a rail line is absolutely necessary to move the aggregate from the quarry site to a major rail line which already exists approximately seven miles to the south. Using trucks to carry this amount of material on our rural roads would cause extreme hardships and many complications for persons living and/or working in this area of our county. Also a railroad built soon would offer transit for future economic growth in this region.

It was written in Volume 2 of your recent publication, "As milled lumber became more readily available with the arrival of the railroad in 1881, settlers seeking to shield their houses from the harsh Texas sun often added front porches." We must not forget the favorable influence which railroad transportation has had on all of this county, including improvements in the historic buildings in the settlements of Quihi and New Fountain. If progress in Medina County is not encouraged, we are not contributing to our ancestors' goals to use what occurs in nature to better provide for the needs of our society. Most forms of transportation and much construction rely on continuing supplies of the limestone aggregate to be quarried by Vulcan Materials.

Prior to receiving a permit to construct this railway, Vulcan Materials submitted several routes which were to be considered by you. Since that time other individuals and groups have offered suggestions for various other courses which could be followed. We feel that the original route proposed by Vulcan Materials is far more desirable for this region than any other plan presented at this time. Our grounds for this choice are as follows:

- I. This path offers the straightest, most direct means of joining the sizeable railroad already in place. The distance involved would reduce the burden of extensive tracks layed across this treasured land when compared to alternate routes to the east.

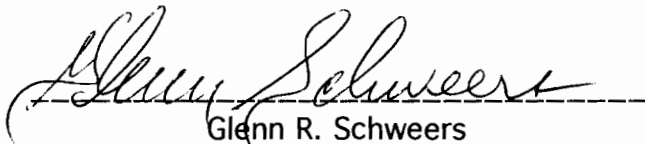
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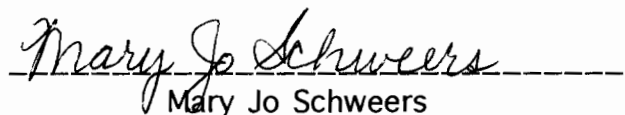
2. Fewer roads would be affected by railroad crossings, resulting in safer travel in the area. We trust that any and all crossings will be easily identified with proper warning signals and respected by anyone who has driving experience. Also, fewer crossings will offer minimal obstacles for fire trucks, ambulances, and other emergency vehicles to contend with when they are needed.
3. Limited railroad tracks and crossings would minimize the number of drainage tracts to be examined and dealt with to reduce worries about flooding. However, well-engineered rail lines will follow guidelines of federal and local water management agencies and should not contribute to flooding concerns.
4. The anxiety about this preferred route affecting valued historical structures and sites was not demonstrated before Vulcan Materials proposed their quarry and preferred route. In fact, Vulcan began to assist in the restoration of an historical home and nearby cemetery dating to the 1800's, prior to Quihi becoming an "historical village." Historical structures and districts dating to the 1700's are located beside and near railroad tracks throughout earlier settlements of America.
5. At this time Vulcan Materials is already the owner of several portions of land through which their proposed route would travel.
6. Many other persons have shown support for a choice made by Vulcan Mining. Most people who are in favor of eastern routes do not live nor work in those locations. It often has become a matter of, "Somewhere else, 'Not in my back yard.'" Our family currently works in farming and ranching on three parcels of land in the proposed quarry region - one of which has been in our family since the 1800's.

We are not in the minority where some would place us because we do not burden your membership with repetitive correspondence. It is our belief that once our point of view is stated, we need not restate our feelings with numerous communications to your office. At this time we appreciate your provision for another 45-day public comment period. We trust you will accept our ideas as a vote for the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's proposed route for a rail line from the planned Vulcan Materials and Mining site to the Union Pacific line in Medina County.

Thank you for your continued attention and generous time spent in the comprehensive study of this venture.

Sincerely,


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