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revised
11/3/05

Dec 29, 2004

FEI-127
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Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
1925 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20423

RE: Southwest Gulf Railroad Company
Proposed Rail Construction
Medina County, Texas
Docket # 34284

This letter is in response to the invitation for public comment on the proposed railroad in Medina County, Texas requested by Southwest Gulf Railroad Company.

My name is M. Douglas Riff. I presently reside at 242 W. Hosack, Boerne, Texas, (Phone # 830-249-3906). I was born in the New Fountain-Quiki Community in 1951 and lived in the area until 1978. Today I still own farm and Ranch land in the community (about 3 miles from the proposed railroad). This land will remain in my family's possession until at least the next generation.

My Great Great Grandfather's and Grandmother's on three sides of my family (RIF, BOHM FALK, AND SCHWEERS)

immigrated to the New Fountain - Benke Community during the period 1845 to 1860's. Five of their homes are still standing in Benke. One of these is the Henry Scheweers Home and was featured in the STB presentation given in Hondo, Texas on December 2nd, 2004

Besides my personal heritage, I have many ties to the community. Many of my old friends and relatives still own property and live in the immediate area of the proposed rail line. For the people who own property in the exact path of the rail line, I believe they will be severely impacted and need to be generously compensated, hopefully by negotiation rather than Court order.

For those who own land in the community but not in the exact path of the rail line, I believe the impact will be minimal. Except for horns sounding at rail crossings and occasional delay while traveling to Rio Medina, Hondo, or Castroville the impact will have little affect on those who reside or own property in the area.

I believe that the positive effect to the community far outweighs the negative aspects because it will provide good jobs to young people who would prefer to work in the community rather than travel to San Antonio as farther. The associated Quarry will also provide quality materials at reasonable cost for County road improvements as well as contribute substantially to the tax base for schools and County roads.

Other reasons why the Railroad is needed and I have heard no discussion, is the fact that the Gulf Coast (Beaumont to Corpus Christi) is devoid of quality deposits of stone or Gravel. Gravel deposits have been mostly depleted. Therefore, stone for construction must come from some other region of the State. It is vital to the State economy that Highway connecting the Metro Area along the Gulf Coast to the interior of the State be maintained and improved. This Railroad and the Quarry it will serve is probably the very best location to serve the growing needs of stone to the

the coast and will reduce the cost of highways to the tax payers of the State of Texas.

Vulcan Materials Company (owner of the proposed Railroad) is the premier stone producer in the United States and has a record dating back to at least the 1960's of leading the Stone Industry in eliminating environmental concerns. I worked for Vulcan from 1973 until 1978 and have personal knowledge of their commitment to a clean environment. I believe most residents of the New Fountain - Oquirri Community will be pleasantly surprised at what good neighbors Vulcan will be.

Sincerely,

Douglas Riff