

RH



Public Meetings
December 2, 2004

Comment Form

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- ☐ I wish to speak today.
- ☐ I do not want to speak but would like SEA to read my comments at the meeting.
- ☒ I wish to submit a written comment, but do not want it read at today's meeting.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

**Statement of Tom Ransdell, Project Manager, Southwest Gulf Railroad
Before the Surface Transportation Board
Hondo, Texas
December 2, 2004**

- **Good evening. I'm Tom Ransdell, project manager for this Southwest Gulf Railroad project and on the proposed quarry here in Medina County.**
- **I'd like to thank the members of the Surface Transportation Board for their investment of time and resources in this project, and for the thoroughness of the draft Environmental Impact Statement prepared by the agency's Section of Environmental Analysis.**
- **The draft EIS identifies a total of 47 recommended mitigation measures, including many measures which we had voluntarily incorporated into our own planning for the project.**
- **We are encouraged that the draft EIS concludes that the building of the rail line would not result in significant adverse environmental impacts, provided that the specified mitigation measures are implemented.**
- **We understand that a significant new project like this raises questions and concerns in the community. While those concerns were addressed in the draft EIS, there are several I would like to address specifically.**
- **Regarding traffic and safety in the area, I would like to point out that our trains will travel at low speeds of 25 miles per hour or less. The volume of rail traffic we are proposing from the quarry would be light. Trains would pass through road crossings in less than five minutes – not the long traffic delays that some have predicted. Finally, the rail would operate with the appropriate safety measures recommended by the Texas Department of Transportation and the Federal Railroad Administration.**
- **Many claims have been made about water supplies in the area. The draft EIS concluded that with mitigation, the rail line would not significantly impact area water resources – including aquifers or wetlands in the areas of streams and creeks – nor would it result in flooding. The fact is, well-engineered rail lines that follow the guidelines of federal and local water management agencies do not contribute to flooding concerns.**
- **Over the past few years, we have consulted with a number of water management agencies, including the Edwards Aquifer Authority, to evaluate any potential concerns. The fuel storage will be located off the recharge zone. Likewise, the rail route would be primarily south of the recharge zone.**

- **Finally, if I may say a word about the quarry, I would like to point out the very real benefits of this quarry to Medina County and to Texas. The \$30 million we would invest would provide a significant economic boost to Medina County. Once operating, the quarry would be the largest private employer and the largest source of tax revenue in the County, generating an estimated \$7.5 million in annual direct and indirect economic benefits. Notably, an estimated \$650,000 in annual County taxes will be paid by Vulcan, \$400,000 of which will directly benefit local schools.**
- **For all these reasons, Vulcan Materials is committed to this railroad project – and to doing it right. I would add that we are serious about our commitment to being a good neighbor, and we take great care to work closely with our neighbors in the communities where we operate. We are convinced -- and the results of the draft Environmental Impact Statement support this -- that rail is the best option for serving our quarry and this is a project that will work in Medina County. Thank you.**