

United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
101 South Main Street
Temple, TX 76501-7602



November 19, 2004

Ms. Rini Ghosh
SEA, Project Manager
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

We have reviewed the information provided in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, STB Docket No. FD 34284, for the proposed construction of the Southwest Gulf Rail Line in Medina County, Texas. Our agency is primarily concerned with actions that may impact Important Farmland. We have reviewed this Draft EIS as required by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

As you requested in Section 4.10.2 of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, we have developed a composite rating for each alternative listed (proposed route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3) and completed the AD-1006 Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for all alternatives. The total points in Part VII of the AD-1006 is 123 for the proposed route, 142 for Alternative 1, 138 for Alternative 2 and 120 for Alternative 3. The FPPA law states in 7 CFR 658.4 c (2) that "Sites receiving a total score of less than 160 need not be given further consideration for protection and no additional sites need to be evaluated."

Thank you for the opportunity to review this Draft EIS and the resource materials you submitted to evaluate this project. We also thank you for recognizing the importance of soils in the Draft EIS.

If you have any questions, please call James Greenwade in the Soils Section at 254-742-9960, Fax (254)-742-9859.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Larry D. Butler".

LARRY D. BUTLER, Ph.D.
State Conservationist

cc: Mike Risinger, MLRA Leader, Region 9/State Soil Scientist, Texas
James Greenwade, Soil Scientist, NRCS, Texas

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Date Of Land Evaluation Request 11-5-2004				
Name of Project Southwest Gulf Railroad Company		Federal Agency Involved Surface Transportation Board				
Proposed Land Use Rail Transportation		County and State Medina County, Texas				
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		Date Request Received By NRCS 11-15-2004		Person Completing Form: James Greenwade		
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)		YES ☒ NO ☐		Acres Irrigated 44330 Average Farm Size 477		
Major Crop(s) Grain Sorghum	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 625,600 % 73		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 574,330 %67			
Name of Land Evaluation System Used LESA	Name of State or Local Site Assessment System NONE		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 11-16-2004			
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Alternative Site Rating				
		Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D	
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly		64.2	81.6	62.2	68.2	
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly		0	0	0	0	
C. Total Acres In Site		64.2	81.6	62.2	68.2	
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information						
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland		48.6	77.2	59.2	48.4	
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland		0	0	0	0	
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted		0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value		34	32	32	40	
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value Of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)		55	69	70	52	
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)		Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
1. Area In Non-urban Use		(15)	14	14	14	14
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use		(10)	9	9	9	9
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed		(20)	10	10	10	10
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government		(20)	0	0	0	0
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area		(15)	0	0	0	0
6. Distance To Urban Support Services		(15)	0	0	0	0
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average		(10)	0	0	0	0
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland		(10)	10	15	10	10
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services		(5)	5	5	5	5
10. On-Farm Investments		(20)	10	10	10	10
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		(10)	5	5	5	5
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		(10)	5	5	5	5
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160	68	73	68	68
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)						
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)		100	55	69	70	52
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)		160	68	73	68	68
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)		260	123	142	138	120
Site Selected:		Date Of Selection		Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES ☐ NO ☐		
Reason For Selection: A= Proposed Route, B=Alternative 1, C=Alternative 2, D=Alternative 3						
Name of Federal agency representative completing this form:					Date:	

(See Instructions on reverse side)

Form AD-1006 (03-02)