

222 County Road 363
Hondo, Texas 78861
January 8, 2005

EI-1344

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, DC 20423

received
1/11/05

Attention: Rini Ghosh
STB Docket No. FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My view of the proposed railroad and quarry is one interconnected action. If there is no quarry, then there is no need for a railroad. If there is no railroad, then possibly there is no need for a quarry.

My concern is mainly with safety. The first concern involves the Medina Lake Dam. It is over ninety years old and many have questioned its continued safety. During the flood of 2002 the Bexar County Judge caused a near panic for residents living downstream from the dam in the Castroville and LaCoste areas as he was afraid the dam would not hold the overflow of water. Since there many faults radiating in a northeast direction from the quarry toward Medina Lake, no one knows for sure what effects blasting will have on the dam. It is too large a problem to ignore. If that dam were to give way, it would cause hundreds of deaths and untold property damage. Vulcan and its insurance carriers would not be able to pay the damages that could be caused. (Note: geologic reference for the faults is found in Edwards Aquifer Outcrops, Medina County, Ted A. Small and Allan K. Clark, Water Resources Investigative Report 00-4195, 2000).

The second safety concern is the construction of the proposed railroad. During this construction utilities could be cut off such as electricity, water, and telephone; traffic will be interrupted for commuters and emergency vehicles such as fire trucks, ambulances, and sheriff's deputies. School buses will be impacted and delayed. Also, grade-separated crossings must be constructed especially on FM2676 and CR4516.

The third concern is traffic after the proposed railroad is constructed. There will be four trains per day, numerous gravel trucks at about 78,000 pounds each, workers commuting to and from the quarry. All of this extra traffic will create havoc for the commuter, and especially school buses. When trains are crossing FM2676 and the various county roads, there will be the delays for commuters, school buses, and emergency vehicles.

Additional safety concerns are: What will the blasting will do to shallow and Edwards wells? What will the resultant dust from blasting and the railroad cars do to the lungs of local residents? We already have a seasonal respiratory problem with mountain cedar(juniper). Also. what are the railroad berms and trestles going to do when we have

flooding. Is the water going to be diverted and cause more problems that we have had in the recent past? How fast will the roads deteriorate after the gravel trucks are run on them?

The Draft Environmental Impact Study quoted Vulcan many times as "using normal management practices" to solve any problems. That does not satisfy any rational concern. What are the resources they will apply to these problems, both monetary and manpower? What will they do to alleviate flooding? What will they do if the Medina Dam starts cracking? They have to outline these possible problems and not just gloss over them.

Thank you for the chance to respond to the draft EIS. I trust the STB will give this situation a great deal of thought and stop this project before it is too late.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Morris Baxter".

Morris Baxter

Cc: Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchison
Sen. John Cornyn
Rep. Henry Bonilla
State Sen. Frank Madla
State Rep. Tracy King