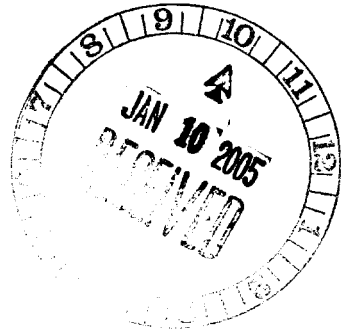


Jan 7th, 2005

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423
Attn: Rini Ghosh
STB Docket No. FD 34284



This is my second letter in response to the invitation for public comment on the proposed rail line in Medina Co., Texas requested by Southwest Gulf Railroad Company.

My name is Melvin Douglas Riff. I presently reside at 242 W. Wacoack, Baytown, Texas (77006) (Phone 830-248-3906). I was born in the New Fountain - Quikie Community in 1931 and lived in the community 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, BATHFALK, AND SCHWEERS) immigrated to the New Fountain - Quikie Community from 1845 to the 1860's. Two of their homes are still standing in Quikie. One of these homes is the

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"Henry Schwere House" and was pictured 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 Cartersville the impact will have little effect on those who reside and/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

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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 this railroad is needed and I have heard no discussion is the fact that the Gulf Coast (Beaumont to Corpus Christi) is devoid of deposits of quality stone and 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 Highways connecting the Metro Areas along the Gulf Coast to the interior of the State be maintained and improved. This railroad and quarry in Quinlan is probably the very best location to serve the growing needs for stone along the Gulf Coast and will reduce the cost of highways to the Tax Payers of Texas.

Vulcan Materials Company (owner of the proposed rail line) is the premier stone producer in the United States and has a record dating back at least to the 1960's of leading the

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Stone Industry is eliminating environmental concerns at all their quarry sites. 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 - Quinby community will be pleasantly surprised at what good neighbors Vulcan will be.

Sincerely,
Douglas Rife