

Surface Transportation Board
395 E/ Street SW
Washington, DC. 20423
Attn: Ms. Diana Wood, Section of Environmental Analysis.

158-3240
FD 34284
60021-1 11 17

Re. STB Finance Docket No. 34284
Southwest Gulf Railroad, Medina County, TX.

Dear Ms. Wood:

We are writing this letter concerning the SGR proposed eastern bypass routes and the programmatic agreement which will affect the upper Quihi area.

We are residents of upper Quihi but not directly on either of the eastern routes. We do appreciate the history of our area and want every effort possible made to preserve and honor the early settlers, the land and resources. Many cultural resources remain undetected and will only be found by through survey which must be done before railroad construction can occur.

We wish at this time, to commend SEA on the studies that have been done so far. They have been fair and well done, but more studies must be done before the eastern routes can be approved. Because of your studies, the realization that we are in a historical district has been substantiated. You cannot meet a long time resident and not know that history lives here. We, that live in Quihi have always known this as fact. We have fought since the year 2000, through MCEAA and our letters, to convince SGR/Vulcan that complying with the strict guidelines set up in the programmatic agreements for historical areas will be to everyone's best interest.

We belong to the Bethlehem Lutheran Church which was established in 1852 by the local settlers. This church is identified as location Number One in the SDEIS. I am presently vice-president of the church council and deal daily with the church and its members. This church has always been, and continues to be, a vital part of the Quihi area. This SGR railroad project has had a very large impact on our membership. Most of our members live in this area and will be affected by any route selected by STB. Furthermore, the stability of this fragile church will be affected during the building of the railroad. FM 2676, the main road through both Quihi and Upper Quihi, runs directly in front of Bethlehem Lutheran Church. The hundreds of trucks used in construction of this railroad could seriously affect the very fragile 100 year old stone foundation.

Since this project will impact both upper and lower Quihi for years to come, we sincerely request that all properties affected by the railroad, have extensive surveys accomplished before construction can begin. Even though the church is not directly on any of the railroad routes, we feel construction of same would be harmful.

Sincerely,

Tom Walpole *Mary F. Walpole*

Tom and Mary Walpole
5201 FM 2676 Hondo, TX. 78861

cc: Texas State Historical Commission
Advisory Council on Historic Preservation