



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

The State Agency for Historic Preservation

RICK PERRY, GOVERNOR

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F. LAWRENCE OAKS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

May 14, 2007

Mr. Gary Balzen
5527 Timber Trace
San Antonio, Texas 78250-4208

Received June 1, 2007
FD #34284
Dfw

#E1-2954

Re: Response to letter concerning the potential routes for Southwest Gulf Railroad and the Surface Transportation Board's Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS).

Dear Mr Balzen:

Thank you for contacting our office regarding your concerns about the potential routes of the Southwest Gulf Railroad and their impacts to your property. It is our understanding that the Surface Transportation Board (STB) has received a similar letter, however we have also passed along a copy of the one we received and copied them on this response. The STB is required by the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 to consider the impact of its project on historic resources and to seek methods to avoid, minimize or mitigate any adverse effects on those resources. The Board is also required by this federal law to consult with the State Historic Preservation Office, which is the Texas Historical Commission. Selection of the route, if any, is the responsibility of the STB.

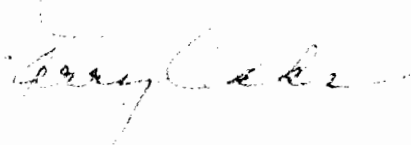
The home you reference is considered by our office and the STB as individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. It is Site # 204 in the DSEIS, a German- Alsatian house and farmstead. Like the other historic properties potentially effected by the construction of the rail line, the STB is required to seek methods to avoid or minimize adverse effects to this property. Our office agrees that this house and farmstead is worthy of preservation. All of the routes have the potential to impact historic structures and archeological sites. Unfortunately for this property, the eastern alternatives appear to be less disruptive overall to historic resources than the western routes. However, should the STB select one of the eastern alternatives that impacts your property, we will work with that agency and the railroad to avoid or minimize the adverse effects to the buildings and farmstead.

It is important to realize that the exact alignments shown in the DSEIS are approximations created by the railroad and STB. While the final constructed route is likely to adhere closely to the general alignments shown, it is expected that there will be opportunity, if not requirements from STB, to shift specific alignments to avoid damage to historic resources. Considerations such as property access, agricultural use, and irrigation systems will all need to be factored into the route selection and construction design. The combined alternative you have suggested is intriguing and it will be up to STB to determine its feasibility. We will point out that the route you propose would avoid impacting the structures on your property but would potentially impact resource #216 and/or #214 both resources eligible for the National Register as well.

If you have not done so already, we suggest that you formally request that STB grant you or your family, consulting party status under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. This will allow you to formally participate in the discussions throughout the remainder of the process, including aspects of the actual design should STB approve any of the alternatives.

We appreciate your concerns for your family's historic farmstead and hope to find a solution that protects it along with the other historic resources of Quihi. Please feel free to contact my office with any questions or concerns at 512/463-6100.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "F. Lawrence Oaks", written in dark ink.

F. Lawrence Oaks, State Historic Preservation Officer

FLO/BP

Cc: Diana Wood, Surface Transportation Board