

#E1-2727

RS

January 14, 2007
3122 CR 265
Mico, TX 78056-5004

Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
Attn: Rini Ghosh
Ref: Finance Docket #34284
1925 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Received
1/29/07

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We own 46 acres about 1.5 miles northeast of the northeast corner of the proposed Vulcan quarry boundary. We purchased our property in 1993 and built a home in 1995. The location is quiet, restful and just the thing for someone that suffers from a chronic respiratory disease. Our investment took a goodly portion of our savings. Then in 1999, on the scene comes Vulcan Materials, threatening all that most humans desire in their living environment. Unfortunately, existing Texas Environmental Laws are lacking in scope and enforcement due to the "Good Old Boy" attitude that exists. This attitude will eventually go the way of the other laws that contribute to the legal rape of our resources.

We were told that this will be the largest quarry in Texas and that it will be in operation for 50 years. It is also sited over the Edwards aquifer, which is the lifeblood of a good portion of south Texas.

I do not have the money to discourage the proposed Vulcan Quihi Limestone Quarry or the proposed rail line, BUT I can write and tell our elected officials, state and local organizations and community groups that my health, safety and economic well being is threatened.

I have been told that our comments concerning the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Finance Docket No 34284 are being solicited and so desire to make the following comments about this project:

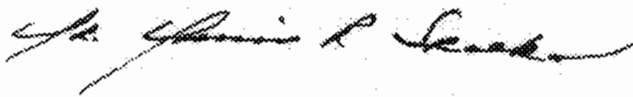
1. The routes designated, as Proposed Route, Alternative 1 and Alternative 2 are the least desirable of the eight outlined in your Figure 2-1 Southwest Gulf Railroad Location of Rail Alternatives. The effect of flooding due to the altering of the flood plain from berms and elevations necessary for railroad construction cannot be fully appreciated unless you have witnessed heavy rainfall in that area which we have. Additionally, those routes transverse historically significant homes and buildings that the early settlers constructed in the Quihi area. Not only is there a potential for damaging or destroying these structures but archeological history rich along ancient waterways and prairies would be lost forever with the placement of a rail line in that vicinity. We would propose that a modification of the route designated as the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative and SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route be our choice. This modification is as follows: Follow the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative from Dunlay North to the northern intersection with the SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route just south of where it intersects with FM2676 and then follow the SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route to its conclusion. This allows traffic traveling south on FM 265 to divert to either FM 2676 East or FM 354 West in event of emergency in the event a train blocks FM 2676 at the crossing. The terrain seems to be friendlier to issues of flooding, etc if a combination of these two routes is the ultimate choice. (Atch 1)
2. The FM 2676 is major route for residents of the area. It connects with FM 173 to the west and FM 471 to the east. Where ever it is decided that the railroad transect FM 2676,

Vulcan Materials should be responsible for the construction of an overpass as to not impede the flow of traffic and to remove the threat of eventual deaths that most certainly will result from a mutual crossing.

3. Other roads, specifically FM 351, FM 354, and FM 4516 will require extensive improvements depending on the route that trucks hauling crushed rock will take. FM 4516 requires a bridge at the point it crosses Quihi Creek. Presently, it is a concrete paved wash and would deteriorate quickly with extensive truck traffic. These items should all be considered in the original planning and funded by Vulcan rather than at taxpayer expense.
4. At an earlier meeting, Vulcan Materials stated that they were going to remove over 200,000,000 tons of aggregate over a period of 50 years. This would result in 4,000,000 tons of aggregate removal annually. Vulcan Materials has stated that 10-15% of the material will be removed by trucks, (400,000 - 600,000 tons annually). In Volume 1, Paragraph 4.17.1, Transportation to Local Markets, states on page 4-105 that trucks would transport 100,000 tons per year. This understates the use of trucks for the hauling of aggregate by a factor of 4 or more if their original estimates are accurate. Instead of the 24 round trips per day, 96 – 144 round trips per day would be required. Aggregate haulers (trucks) will definitely impact the ability of Medina County to maintain these roads and force the burden upon the Tax Payers for commercial benefits. The actual estimated taxes and benefits to Medina County will not even begin to pay for the increase in road maintenance alone. It should also be remembered the potential for injury and death, broken windshields, etc resulting from trucks traveling narrow country roads for which they were not designed will be borne by the residents and visitors to Medina County.

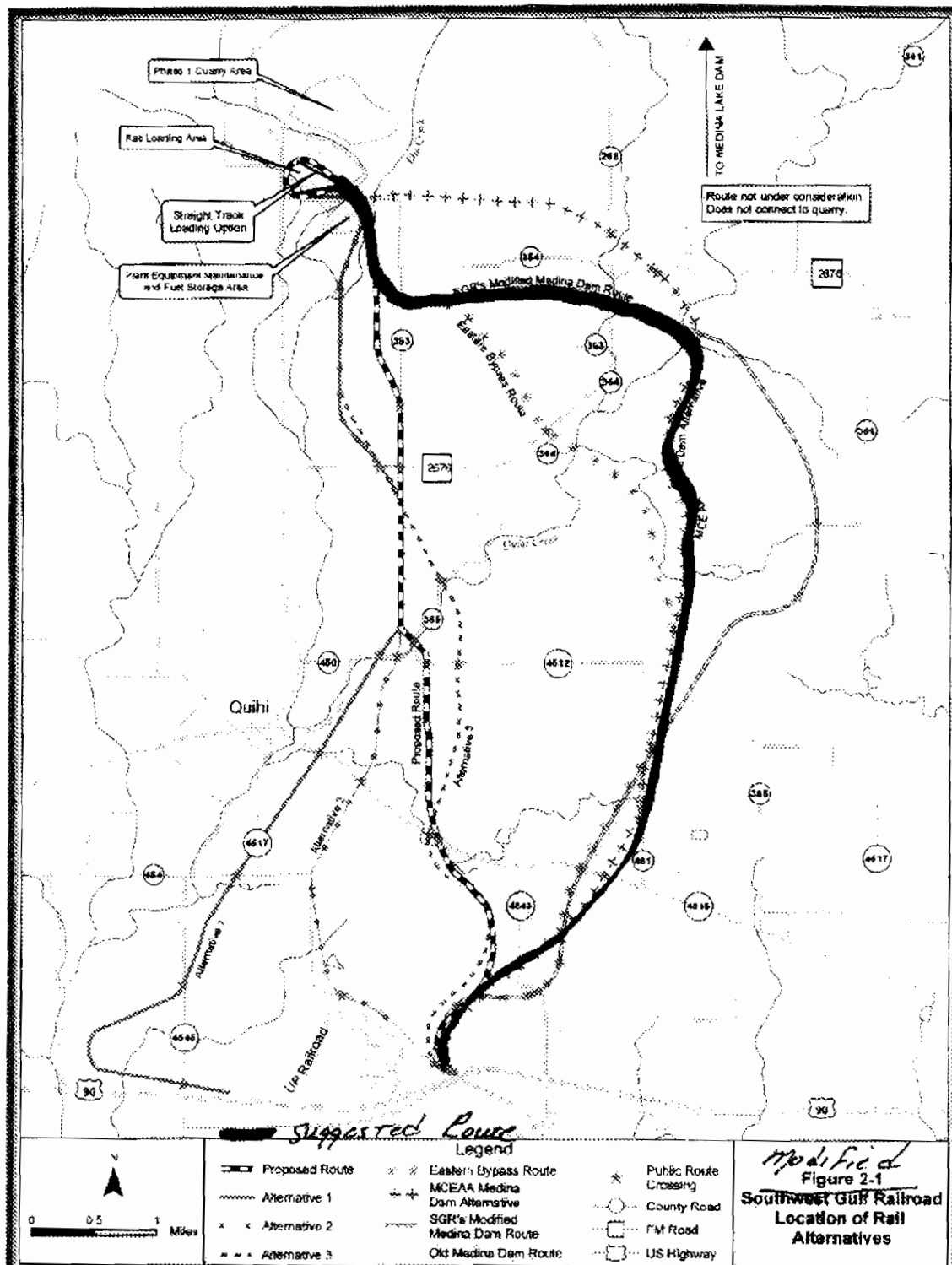
5. I fail to understand the need for locating the Fuel Storage Facility in the Elm and Polecat Creek floodplains. Heavy rains such as occurred in 2004, 2002, 1998, etc., have resulted in extensive flooding from the vast watershed above the quarry site eventually making its way to the Bay at Corpus Christi. If Vulcan Materials wishes to demonstrate their desire to do all they can to protect the Edwards Aquifer, they would relocate their fuel storage and Maintenance facility to the other end of the rail line in Dunlay.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my concerns relative to the proposed quarry.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dennis R. Skalka". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Dennis R. Skalka, DVM, MPH

Atch, Modified Route
Map



Attachment –
Modified Route