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United States Department of Agriculture



Natural Resources Conservation Service
101 South Main Street
Temple, TX 76501-7602

March 28, 2006

Surface Transportation Board
Section of Environmental Analysis
1925K Street, N. W.
Washington DC 20423-0001

*Received
4/5/06*

Attention: Rini Ghosh, SEA, Project Manager

Subject: LNU-Farmland Protection-
Supplemental Draft EIS
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company
STB Docket No. FD 34284
Medina County, Texas

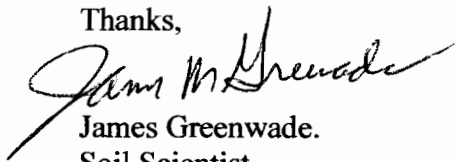
We have reviewed the information provided Concerning the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (FD 34284) for the proposed construction of the Southwest Gulf Rail line in Medina County, Texas. Our agency is primarily concerned with actions that may impact Important Farmland. We have reviewed this Draft EIS as required by the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA).

We have previously responded to the four alternatives outlined in the Draft EIS dated Nov 5, 2004. We have evaluated the three additional proposed routes outlined in Figure 1-FD 34284 attached to your notice dated March 13, 2006. We have estimated the location of routes outlined in Figure 1 and drafted these routes on a soil map. Acreage for each route was estimated by measuring the map distance and estimated a 100 foot ROW. We developed a composite rating for each proposed route (Eastern Bypass Route, MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative, and SRG's Modified Medina Dam Route) and completed the AD-1006 Farmland Conversion Impact Rating for all three alternatives. The total points in Part VII of the AD-1006 are 130 for the Eastern Bypass Route, 125 for the MCEAA Medina Dam Route, and 134 for SRG's Modifier Dam Route. The FPPA law states in 7 CFR 658.4 c (2) that "Sites receiving a total score of less than 160 need not be given further consideration for protection and no additional sites need to be evaluated."

Alternative Route	Estimated Ac.	Prime Farmland Ac.	AD-1006 Score
Eastern Bypass	106	46	130
MCEAA Medina Dam	115	35	125
SGR Modified M. Dam	142	69	134

Thanks for the opportunity to reply to this supplemental Draft EIS and the resource materials you submitted to evaluate this project. We also thank you for recognizing the importance of soils in the planning process. If you have any questions please call James Greenwade in the Soils Section at (254)-742-9960, Fax (254)-742-9859.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James M. Greenwade". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the left.

James Greenwade.

Soil Scientist

USDA-NRCS, Temple, Texas

U.S. Department of Agriculture

FARMLAND CONVERSION IMPACT RATING

PART I (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Date Of Land Evaluation Request 3-28-2006			
Name of Project Southwest Gulf Railroad		Federal Agency Involved Department of Energy			
Proposed Land Use Railroad Transportation		County and State Medina County, Texas			
PART II (To be completed by NRCS)		Date Request Received By NRCS 3-28-2006		Person Completing Form: James Greenwade	
Does the site contain Prime, Unique, Statewide or Local Important Farmland? (If no, the FPPA does not apply - do not complete additional parts of this form)		YES ☒ NO ☐		Acres Irrigated 44,330	Average Farm Size 477
Major Crop(s) Grain Sorghum	Farmable Land In Govt. Jurisdiction Acres: 625,600 % 73		Amount of Farmland As Defined in FPPA Acres: 574,330 % 67		
Name of Land Evaluation System Used LESA	Name of State or Local Site Assessment System NONE		Date Land Evaluation Returned by NRCS 3-28-2006		
PART III (To be completed by Federal Agency)		Alternative Site Rating			
		Site A	Site B	Site C	Site D
A. Total Acres To Be Converted Directly		106	115	142	
B. Total Acres To Be Converted Indirectly		0	0	0	
C. Total Acres In Site		106	115	142	
PART IV (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Information					
A. Total Acres Prime And Unique Farmland		48	35	69	
B. Total Acres Statewide Important or Local Important Farmland		0	0	0	
C. Percentage Of Farmland in County Or Local Govt. Unit To Be Converted		0.0001	0.0001	0.0001	
D. Percentage Of Farmland in Govt. Jurisdiction With Same Or Higher Relative Value		34	40	32	
PART V (To be completed by NRCS) Land Evaluation Criterion Relative Value of Farmland To Be Converted (Scale of 0 to 100 Points)		62	57	66	
PART VI (To be completed by Federal Agency) Site Assessment Criteria (Criteria are explained in 7 CFR 658.5 b. For Corridor project use form NRCS-CPA-106)		Maximum Points	Site A	Site B	Site C
1. Area In Non-urban Use		(15)	14	14	14
2. Perimeter In Non-urban Use		(10)	9	9	9
3. Percent Of Site Being Farmed		(20)	10	10	10
4. Protection Provided By State and Local Government		(20)	0	0	0
5. Distance From Urban Built-up Area		(15)	0	0	0
6. Distance To Urban Support Services		(15)	0	0	0
7. Size Of Present Farm Unit Compared To Average		(10)	0	0	0
8. Creation Of Non-farmable Farmland		(10)	10	10	10
9. Availability Of Farm Support Services		(5)	5	5	5
10. On-Farm Investments		(20)	10	10	10
11. Effects Of Conversion On Farm Support Services		(10)	5	5	5
12. Compatibility With Existing Agricultural Use		(10)	5	5	5
TOTAL SITE ASSESSMENT POINTS		160	68	68	68
PART VII (To be completed by Federal Agency)					
Relative Value Of Farmland (From Part V)		100	62	57	66
Total Site Assessment (From Part VI above or local site assessment)		160	68	68	68
TOTAL POINTS (Total of above 2 lines)		260	130	125	134
Site Selected:		Date Of Selection		Was A Local Site Assessment Used? YES ☐ NO ☐	
Reason For Selection: A= Eastern Bypass Route B= MCEAA Medina Dam Route C= SGR Modified Medina Dam Route					