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RJ

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3122 CR 265
Mico, TX 78056-5004

Ref: Finance Docket #34284

Received
1/29/07

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

To: Rini Ghosh

My husband and I 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 and the discriminating retirees. Our retirement dream took a goodly portion of our savings. Then in 1999, 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.

I would like to share with you a letter found on Jan. 15, 2007 San Antonio Express News' Editorial Page that reflect my thought about the helplessness we have concerning the effect of Vulcan's venture in our area. The letter stresses the lack of concern to

protect the environment from the prostitution of those that want to make a buck from nature's best. Big 500 Fortune companies have the political and financial backing that creates a very difficult situation for the poor folks living around their quagmires located in neighborhoods that do not want them. They encourage their employees and families outside this area to support this untoward investment that does support the unhealthy and unsafe environment they produce.

Mulch fire a symptom

The Helotes mulch fire brings out all the issues that keep Texas leaders in first place for environmental ignorance, avarice and corruption.

Quality of life is never considered a priority by most elected and agency leaders who, generally, are controlled by developers. Texas developers care only about making money and give lip service to environmental issues. The Legislature continues to be controlled by moneyed interests so the status quo is maintained.

San Antonio's leaders only take pride in creating more — more population, more housing, more businesses, more traffic, another professional team — while never considering serious environmental planning. And the populace seldom questions it. Regulations are minimal and never enforced — unless a developer is being restricted.

Authorities quickly concluded the fire was started by arsonists.

People are rightly concerned about the deteriorating quality of life in the area, but no effective counteraction will occur until developers are better controlled by elected leaders.

— W.L. Richter,
Boerne

My husband spent 26 years in Air Force as Officer working in the Healthcare and Sanitation Management Programs. I am a Registered Nurse and have a Master Degree in Health Care Management. We both do not support the Vulcan Quarry. We do not want the Quarry as a neighbor, nor a railroad to support that quarry.

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.

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

We 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. 2. The FM 2676 is major route for residents of the area. It connects with FM 171 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. 3. Other roads, specifically FM 351, FM 354, and FM 4516 will require extensive improvements if depending on the route that trucks hauling crushed rock will take if some of the other routes are chosen. 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. 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. I personally have been run off the road barely missed being hit by a truck driving on CR 265 way too fast taking up the road coming around a curve and we have replaced two windshield in the last year from truck throwing gravel because they can not take the time to cover their hauls.

5. 5. I fail to understand the need for locating the Fuel Storage Facility over the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone. If Vulcan

Materials wishes to demonstrate their desire to do all they can to protect the Edwards Aquifer, they would relocate their fuel storage area to the other end of the rail line in Dunlay.

6. Please note that it is interesting how the Vulcan Management has conveniently listed their venture as a Rio Medina Quarry when it actually is located in the Quihi area. This is only a small example on the untruths these folks can generate to try to fool whomever.

I cannot tell you how disappointed I am for this situation, but my heart goes out to those that have property that actually borders this proposed quarry and those folks whose property are subject to the railroad track passing through their private property. It just doesn't seem fair. How can anyone place a value to what we plan for and what is taken away?

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

Margaret A. Skalka, RN

