

#E1-2001
RJ

April 26, 2006

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

received
5/2/06

STB Finance Docket No. 34284
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company----
Construction and Operation Exemption
Medina County, Texas

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My husband's family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land that is shown in dark outline on the enclosed plat – a copy of Figure 1 attached to your Notice of Intent to Prepare Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement – since his grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of his brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for his parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of his parents and all six of his brothers and he while they were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, they have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo are currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through this farm in locations that would severely disrupt the irrigation systems in which they have invested more than \$400,000. But even of greater concern to them is the resulting destruction of their irrigated farm land, upon which much of his family depends for livelihood. Their production, if they are deprived of their irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of their families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. His brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and his parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

However, if your section can look with favor on the suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, their large sprinkler irrigation systems will remain unaffected and their farming operation saved. The suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along their west property boundary, curves eastward across their northwest corner and connects with either the Eastern Bypass Route or the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternate Route. It will render useless about 50 acres of land in their northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, Mr. Russell Mangold, their neighbor on the north

will be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of them that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along their western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by them, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of their farm and their installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save their farm and the means of survival for his brothers and his parents.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Debbie Weiblen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Debbie" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Weiblen".

Debbie Weiblen
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