

#E1-2002  
R21

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 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 my grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of my 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 my parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of our parents and all six of my brothers and I while we were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, we 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 is currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through our farm in locations that would severely disrupt our irrigation systems in which we have invested more than \$400,000. But even of greater concern to us is the resulting destruction of our irrigated farm land, upon which much of my family depends for livelihood. Our production, if we are deprived of our irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of our families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. My brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and my 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 our suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, our large sprinkler irrigation systems will remain unaffected and our farming operation saved. Our suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along our west property boundary, curves eastward across our 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 our northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, Mr. Russell Mangold, our 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 us that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along our western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by us, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of our farm and our 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 our farm and the means of survival for my brothers and my parents.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Michael Weiblen". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Michael Weiblen  
175 CR 373  
Rio Medina, Tx. 78066  
830-931-3920

