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Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street
Washington, DC 20423
RE: Docket FB-36815

Dear Members of the Surface Transportation Board:

My name is Rachel Bishop. My family and I own property in Burnet County, Texas potentially affected by the proposed 27-mile railway project by Texas Materials Group Inc. intended to haul aggregate from Burnet County quarries to Lampasas County. I am writing to urge you to thoroughly investigate the impact this rail line will surely have on the environment as well as the lives of the citizens of Burnet and Lampasas Counties in the Texas Hill Country.

My family has deep roots in the area. My mother grew up in Burnet and, along with my father, raised my brothers, sister, and me in Lampasas. Her grandfather and great-uncle, the Corder brothers, bought the ranch in Burnet County in 1892. This quarry train proposes to go diagonally through the middle of our almost 1,500 acres of ranch land which is basically the same today as it was in 1892 when it was purchased except for some fences, a couple of houses, ponds, and a well. My parents, grandparents, and great grandparents preserved this ranch land and is their legacy left to us, the Bishop children and grandchildren.. We still have cattle on the ranch. The men have had a deer camp they have enjoyed since the 1970's. The wildlife has been nurtured and preserved as well as the beautiful trees, wildflowers, and native grasses. This ranch means the world to the family especially those who have been planning to retire there.

Today I am writing to express my strong opposition to this railway which will greatly affect my family emotionally not to mention financially. The effect on the environment is the worst part. It will also affect our neighbors' lives. It will divide properties, making it difficult to manage cattle and access water and fields.

One environmental concern is the fact that a large portion of the Russell Fork of the San Gabriel River runs through our ranch and closely parallels a proposed path of the railway. I have learned from my research that both rail paths cross the Russell Fork of the river. It is a vital tributary of the San Gabriel River. These waters are important for the vegetation and wildlife as well as recharging groundwater supplies necessary for the wells. Soil compaction and erosion will occur if this rail line is built. Runoff contamination from rail operations could infiltrate springs, creeks, wells, and ponds. This project could violate federal and state water protection laws including the Clean Water Act.

Another environmental concern which is very close to my heart is the effect on the birdlife. I have been a birdwatcher since the 1980's. The number and diversity of the birds on our ranch is hard to duplicate. The birds that are protected under the Endangered Species Act are the Black-Capped Vireo and the Golden-Cheeked Warbler. This property has great habitat for both of these birds. The railway will destroy nesting habitat these birds need to survive which falls under the Endangered Species Act. There are also very many birds that visit the ranch which

are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. If these habitats are destroyed they will not be recovered. The birdlife will be impacted reducing the numbers able to survive.

I have many questions:

What documentation exists that Texas Materials Group has consulted with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and what does this documentation show?

Has Texas Materials Group had any type of environmental studies done and how does someone get to view the reports?

What type of studies have been done concerning the impact of a railway and its construction on the water including rivers, creeks, springs, and wells and what are the results?

How will the air quality be impacted by the construction and operation of the railway?

How would this railway and its construction affect the cattle business as well as any other agricultural business in Burnet County and Lampasas County?

I have many more questions. But more than answers to these questions, I want this heart-breaking nightmare that affects me, my family, fellow citizens of Burnet County and Lampasas County, the water, the birds, and the wildlife to end and for Texas Materials Group to go away!

Since our family has owned the ranch for 133 years we are applying for the Texas Family Land Heritage Program. Hopefully we will have this distinction approved by sometime this summer or fall.

I would appreciate and respectfully request that any and all reports, decisions, notices, etc. be forwarded to me. I have two email addresses: rbishop5555@gmail.com and r_bishop55@sbcglobal.net. My mailing address is Rachel Bishop, 2006 Plymouth Drive, Ennis, Texas 75119.

I will eagerly await your replies and information.

Please stop this railway from destroying my family ranch.

Sincerely,

Rachel Bishop

Rachel Bishop



