

Adam Assenza
OEA Project Manager
Surface Transportation Board
Docket No. FD 36815
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Formal Objection to Proposed Rail Line Near My Family Ranch
Docket No FD 36815 Texas MaterialGroup INC.

Dear Adam Assenza,

I am writing to strongly oppose the proposed Texas Materials Group rail line, which was initially planned to run through my property and now appears to run dangerously close to it. This project raises serious concerns regarding safety, environmental impact, and property devaluation, all of which would have lasting negative effects on my family, my community, and the surrounding land.

Our ranch is a 550-acre family property where we hunt, fish, and operate a commercial hunting business to supplement our retirement income. The construction and operation of this rail line will severely impact the utility of our land and negatively affect its future value.

Safety Concerns

The proximity of this railway to my home introduces significant safety hazards. Increased rail traffic raises the risk of derailments, hazardous spills, and emergency response delays. A derailment or accident near my property could have catastrophic consequences, especially considering the potential transport of industrial materials.

Additionally, the noise and vibrations from passing trains could weaken structural foundations and pose long-term risks to my home's stability, which is only a few hundred feet away.

Environmental Impact

The construction and operation of a rail line so close to my property would result in substantial environmental harm. Noise and air pollution from frequent train activity would disrupt the natural surroundings and negatively affect local wildlife, including several protected species. The emissions from diesel-powered trains would degrade air quality, potentially impacting the health of residents.

Furthermore, runoff and potential spills from rail operations could contaminate nearby water sources, leading to long-term ecological damage. Our property is also home to a federally funded, 60+-acre bird habitat that was recently initiated. This rail line threatens to disrupt migration patterns and undermine the viability of that conservation project.

Property Devaluation

The installation of a railway so close to my home would significantly decrease my property's value. Instead of enjoying the peaceful surroundings of our back porch, we would be subjected to the constant sight and sounds of railcars. The noise, pollution, and increased industrial activity would make our property far less desirable to potential buyers, should we ever wish to sell.

Home values in areas near heavy rail infrastructure consistently suffer declines due to these factors, creating an unfair financial burden on homeowners like myself. Additionally, the loss of privacy and peaceful enjoyment of my land is an unacceptable intrusion on my property rights.

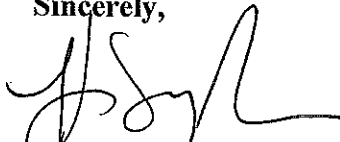
Demand for Alternative Consideration

I urge Texas Materials Group and the relevant authorities to reconsider alternative routes that would not disrupt residential properties and the environment. The lack of transparency and public engagement in this process is deeply concerning. While Texas Materials Group has clearly been planning this project for a significant period of time, affected landowners like myself have been given a mere 30+ days to submit comments. This is unacceptable.

I formally request a written response addressing these concerns, including any proposed mitigation strategies or route adjustments. I will continue to oppose this project through all available legal and administrative channels to protect my home, my community, and the surrounding environment.

I expect a prompt response. Please direct all correspondence to my contact information above.

Sincerely,



Kristin Smyth