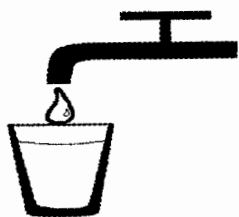


E.M.C.S.U.D.



EAST MEDINA COUNTY
SPECIAL UTILITY DISTRICT
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December 2, 2004

Attn: STB Finance Docket 34284
Ms. Victoria J. Rutson
Chief of Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W., Suite 500
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Re: Proposed Southwest Gulf Railroad Company Rail Construction
Medina County, Texas
STB Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Rutson:

My name is Timothy Hildenbrand. I am an elected public official residing in Medina County, Texas serving as Director and Vice President of the East Medina County Special Utility District. I have a Bachelor of Science degree in Geological Engineering and am a Licensed Professional Geoscientist in the State of Texas.

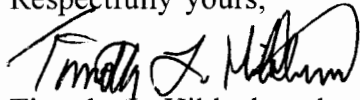
East Medina County Special Utility District's Plant No. 5 lies approximately 5.5 miles south of the proposed Vulcan quarry. The proposed rail line would be constructed to service and facilitate the proposed quarry and would run near our Plant No. 5. East Medina's Plant No. 5 consists of various elevated storage facilities but most importantly two municipal water wells drilled into the Edwards Aquifer. These two wells and aquifer serve approximately 30% of our nearly 2,400 local customers on a daily basis and is the sole source of supply for water for over 700 families.

How can the Surface Transportation Board rule on the proposed Southwest Gulf Railroad Company issue without an exhaustive environmental impact study on the effects of the proposed quarry sitting on the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone? My initial research and study have lead me to conclude that the only 100% guarantee that I can make to my constituency that the proposed Vulcan quarry will not pollute the aquifer in the vicinity of Plant No. 5, is for it not to be constructed. The effects of rain and point source pollutants on the Edwards Aquifer are immediate and dramatic. In the last week alone, water inside Natural Bridge Caverns, located northeast and in the aquifer, rose over 70' concurrent with the recent rains. My point is that although it has good filtering

capacity, the Edwards Aquifer has in fact tremendous permeability, allowing whatever occurs on the surface of the recharge zone to rapidly find its way into the aquifer. I emphasize this because the inexact science of geology allows for different interpretations and we all know paid consultants (of which I am not one) will skew the facts toward the side of their client. The undeniable fact is that the Edwards Aquifer transmits fluids and some particulates with amazing capacity. Why would a governmental agency ever facilitate this type of activity over the recharge zone? Knowing the proximity of this site to our water wells at Plant No. 5, why should the only water supply for these 700 families be placed at risk? Paid consultants for Vulcan/Southwest Gulf Railroad will argue that the risk is negligible. Even if the risk were negligible, why should these families and East Medina County Special Utility District have to bear it?

I have worked in an extractive industry, upstream oil exploration and production, for nearly 25 years. We would dearly love to have the "right of condemnation" as a tool to help us make money. But that is not how the American Free Enterprise System works, that is how Totalitarian governments work. If you allow Vulcan under the guise of Southwest Gulf Railroad to condemn these peoples land for the sole benefit of a private industry I fear not only for their water, I fear for their freedom.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Timothy L. Hildenbrand". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Timothy L. Hildenbrand

Vice President

East Medina County Special Utility District