

Assenza, Adam

From: Tom Wilcox <tom@twilcoxlaw.com>
Sent: Wednesday, February 12, 2025 11:22 AM
To: Assenza, Adam
Cc: Gosselin, Danielle; John Shogren (john.shogren@texasmaterials.com); Alan Summerville
Subject: Texas Materials Rail Project - FD 36815
Attachments: Project Purpose and Need 2-11-25.pdf; Routes_KMZ_20250210.kmz

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Categories: To Enter

Adam - Following up our discussion last week, attached are a project Statement of Purpose and Need and a “KMZ” file of the routes and project area. Also, Texas Materials has not yet begun local outreach, which is something you asked about. Please call me with any questions or if your team needs any additional information.

Regards,
Tom

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DRAFT FOR OEA
February 11, 2025

PROPOSED ACTION AND STATEMENT OF PURPOSE AND NEED

I. Proposed Action

A Class III railroad entity to be created by Texas Materials (“Railroad”) is proposing to establish a 27-mile common carrier rail line that will connect to the tracks of the Austin Western Railroad in the vicinity of Burnet, Texas, and to the tracks of the BNSF Railway in the vicinity of Lampasas, Texas. The new railroad line will be composed of approximately nine miles of newly constructed track and the reconstruction of approximately 18 miles of track on the right-of-way of a former jurisdictional line of railroad that ran between the two cities and was constructed in 1917 by the Houston & Texas Central Railroad (“HTCR”). The line was formally abandoned by a successor railroad to HTCR in 1951 and the track was removed.¹

The preferred route of the new line would begin at approximately Milepost 112.9+/- of the AWRR in Burnet, and end at Milepost 270.6+/- of the BNSF in Lampasas. *See Exhibit A*, which is a map of the project area. The newly constructed track will be located on either end of the existing right-of-way for the purpose of re-establishing the former HTCR route while accommodating the growth of Burnet and Lampasas over the preceding decades.

The proposed federal action is therefore a request to the Surface Transportation Board (Board) to authorize with appropriate conditions the construction and operation of the proposed rail line. The rail line is not being proposed or sponsored by the federal government. Consequently, the purpose and need for the proposed rail line is informed by the goals of Railroad as the project applicant in conjunction with the Board’s enabling statutes.

II. Purpose and Need

There are four large, rail-served rock quarries located along the tracks of the AWRR that ship shuttle trains of aggregate. The locations of the quarries are shown on Exhibit A. Collectively, these quarries produce and ship by railroad 6.5-7 million tons of aggregates annually. Presently, this traffic is transported east by AWRR in shuttle trains of 90 to 98 railcars for interchange with the BNSF or UP at McNeil, Texas. However, this interchange and the BNSF and UP main lines are located in the heavily populated Austin, Texas metropolitan area. Moreover, the AWRR conducts both passenger and freight railroad operations on its lines. Consequently, aggregate and other freight traffic competes with passenger trains for AWRR track capacity, which results in congestion and delays.

The new rail line is being constructed for the purpose of providing an alternative route for the four quarries and other shippers in the Burnet area to transport their commodities to and from

¹ Finance Docket No. 16604, *Texas & New Orleans Railway Abandonment*, 282 I.C.C. 1 (1951)

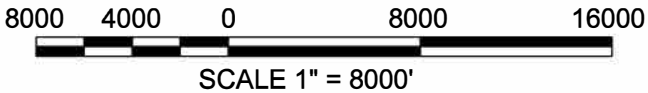
new interchanges to be established with the AWRR near Burnet, and with the BNSF near Lampasas, which is located north and west of the McNeil interchange. The preferred route will provide a more direct path to and from the BNSF main line and will also alleviate congestion on the AWRR system in Austin. This new route is especially needed because the volumes of aggregate being shipped from the Burnet-area quarries are expected to significantly increase over the next 10 years. Preliminary estimates are that 300 loaded trains would traverse the new rail line from the quarries in the first few years, with empty trains returning from the opposite direction. Over time, the volumes could increase to 500 trains/year.

Other commodities that could be transported over the new railroad line include various agricultural commodities, hardware, lumber, transloaded commodities, and future freight arising from economic development in the area. There is no intention that the new railroad would provide any passenger service.

The new track will be constructed initially to meet Federal Railroad Administration Class 1 track standards. The plan and expectation are that rail operations over the new line will be conducted by AWRR and perhaps BNSF pursuant to trackage or operating rights granted to them by Railroad as part of the overall transaction. The initial assumption is that aggregate will be transported in unit trains of up to 120 open top hopper and gondola cars pulled by four locomotives. The total length of such trains will be approximately 6,400 feet. Movement of trains on and off the BNSF mainline would be coordinated with BNSF, with tracks for staging trains constructed on the north end of the new line near the interchange point with BNSF. Future negotiations with BNSF and AWRR may require alterations to the make-up of the train design and/or modifications to the project design parameters to meet desired operation goals.

Exhibit A shows the preferred route and an alternative path for the rail line. The preferred route will entail 13 public road crossings, and 31 drainage crossings. The alternative route, which would begin at approximately Milepost 112.4+/- of the AWRR and end at Milepost 270.8+/- of the BNSF, will entail 8 public road crossings and 29 drainage crossings. Both routes are designed to limit the impacts of the rail line on Burnet and Lampasas, while utilizing the segment of the former HTCR corridor running between the two cities to the maximum extent possible.

EXHIBIT A



PLOT DATE: 2/5/2025

MNTIME\IMPONG

9:34:13 AM

HDR

HDR Engineering, Inc.
600 W 6th St., Suite 200
Fort Worth, TX 76102
817-333-2800
www.hdrinc.com

ISSUE	DATE	DESCRIPTION

BNSF CALL BEFORE YOU DIG # 1-800-545-6005

★

Texas

811

Know what's below.
Call before you dig.

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TEXAS MATERIALS

A CRH COMPANY

TEXAS MATERIALS SHORTLINE

DESIGNED:	HDR-KRK
CHECKED:	HDR-ACS
DRAWN:	HDR-LBB
CHECKED:	HDR-ACS
DATE:	FEB 04, 2025
AUTH:	
LINE SEG:	7500

CONCEPTUAL **NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION**

TEXAS MATERIALS - NEW SHORTLINE		
ROUTES EXHIBIT		
FILENAME	CORRIDOR OPTIONS EXHIBIT	SHEET
SCALE	(FULL-SIZE) - AS NOTED	1 OF 1

EXHIBIT B

