



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

EI-26338

Office of Environmental Analysis

June 15, 2018

Jeff Durst
Texas Historical Commission
Galveston County Project Review
P.O. Box 12276
Austin, Texas 78711

RE: STB Docket No. FD 36186, Texas Railway Exchange—Construction and Operation—in Galveston County, Texas: **Preliminary Environmental Consultation**

Dear Mr. Durst;

Texas Railway Exchange, LLC (TREX) intends to file a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (the Board) seeking authority to construct and operate a new rail line in Galveston, Texas. The Board is an independent federal agency that has jurisdiction over railroad construction and operations. As part of its licensing process, the Board will conduct an environmental review of the proposed rail construction under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related laws and regulations. The purpose of this letter is to advise you of the proposed rail line project and request information from your agency on the resources under your jurisdiction that could be affected by the proposed project.

Project Background

The proposed rail line would be approximately 2,600 feet in length and would provide a rail connection between the Texas International Terminals (TIT) and an existing rail line owned and operated by BNSF Railway Company. TIT is a liquid and dry bulk shipping facility that handles deep draft vessels, barges, trucks, and rail traffic along the Galveston Ship Channel. The facility is currently served by a rail line owned and operated by the Union Pacific Railway Company, but rail capacity on that line is limited. The purpose of the new rail connection would be to create an additional rail transportation option for TIT's customers as well as serve prospective customers at a proposed expansion of TIT's existing facility. TREX believes this would increase transportation and cost efficiencies at TIT. The attached map shows the corridor in which TREX proposes to construct the proposed new rail line in relation to the area served.

Environmental Review Process

Pursuant to NEPA and the Board's environmental rules, the Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) will prepare an environmental document that will evaluate the potential environmental impacts of the proposed rail construction project and the reasonable and feasible alternatives to the proposal. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) will be required if OEA determines that the proposed project would have significant environmental impacts. If the proposed project appears unlikely to have significant environmental impacts, then an Environmental Assessment (EA) may be prepared instead. OEA is beginning the process of gathering information on the project area and project-related issues and concerns. Information



collected will assist us in preparing the appropriate NEPA document for the proposed project.

Request for Comments

At this time, OEA is requesting preliminary comments from agencies and organizations that may have specific knowledge of potential environmental issues and impacts that may be associated with the proposed project. Issues and resource areas that may be important to this project include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Safety
- Local land use
- Existing transportation systems
- Air emissions and ambient air quality
- Energy use
- Water quality and wetlands
- Ambient noise levels
- Historic sites, archaeological sites, and cultural resources
- Socioeconomics (population, employment, and development)
- Wildlife, vegetation, and fisheries
- Soils and geology

Information on additional issues or concerns that you consider appropriate would also be appreciated. Please respond by July 20, 2018 so that we may move forward expeditiously with the environmental review process. Please submit comments and responses to:

Joshua Wayland
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001
Attn: STB Docket No. FD 36186

You may also submit comments electronically through the Board's web site at www.stb.gov by clicking on the "E-Filing" link on the right-hand side of the home page and then selecting "Environmental Comments." Brief comments may be typed within the comment field provided or you may attach comments as a separate file.

If you have any questions concerning agency consultation, the Board's environmental review process, or the proposed project, please do not hesitate to contact Josh Wayland of my staff at (202) 245-0330 or by email at Joshua.Wayland@stb.gov. We appreciate your assistance and look forward to your participation in the Board's environmental review process for this project.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson
Director
Office of Environmental Analysis

