

HEI-26130

Wood, Diana

From: Alyne Fitzgerald <afitzgerald100@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, June 28, 2017 5:22 PM
To: Wood, Diana
Cc: cvaughn@achp.gov
Subject: Letter to Surface Transportation Board
Attachments: 20170612 letter to STB on Quihi Railroad.pdf; STB SGR Quihi Proposal Strickler.docx

Dear Ms. Wood

Enclosed with this letter of explanation are two individual letters regarding the Draft Resolution Plan for Southwest Gulf Railroad's single-track railroad's impact on the Upper Quihi Rural Historic District (UQRHD) FD 34284. These letters were sent to MCEAA and we, as recognized consultants, are forwarding them to you for consideration in formulating the Final Draft Resolution Plan. These letters illustrate the public's interest and deep concern about the flawed DRP.

Mr. Tom Strickler is a member of MCEAA and Mr. Patrick Connor is a past Board Member of Castroville Conservation Society and is writing on CCS behalf. Both. We believe they should be admitted for consideration as part of MCEAA's recognized status with the STB.

Thank you for your attention to these additional comment.

Respectfully,

Dr. Robert Fitzgerald

Patrick Conner, Past Board Member,
Castroville Conservation Society
811 Washington St., Castroville, TX 78009
June 15, 2017

Ms. Diana Wood,
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Southwest Gulf Railroad Company Construction and Operation of Proposed Single-Track Railroad, Medina County, Texas
- STB Finance Docket No. 34284 -
Draft Resolution Plan to Resolve Adverse Effects to Historic Properties - May 30, 2017

Dear Ms. Wood,

The Castroville Conservation Society wishes to thank you for the opportunity to express our opposition to the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's (SGR) Draft Resolution Plan (DRP) to Resolve Adverse Effects to Historic Properties of May 30, 2017.

The Quihi Community is a defining and perpetual part of Castroville's history. As such; The Castroville Conservation Society is dedicated to the preservation of historic buildings, archaeologic sites, objects, places and customs relating to the architecture and history of Castroville as well as those in the Quihi Community.

The Castroville Conservation Society stands with the Upper Quihi Rural Historic District (UQRHD) in our mutual commitment to keep Castroville's and Quihi's unique historic buildings and archeological sites intact, in an effort to keep the history of our intertwined communities vibrant.

SGR's current DRP to construct a rail line through the middle of Upper Quihi Rural Historic District (UQRHD) and other historic and archeological sites is totally unacceptable.

All of the current proposed rail line options listed in SGR's DRP create severe adverse effects for a majority of the historic buildings and other historic and archeological sites, identified by the Texas Historical Commission as eligible for placement on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP).

The construction of any of these currently proposed DRP rail line options create an adverse effect by preventing the registration and placement of these historic buildings and sites on the NRHP.

The UQRHD has been pursuing this designation for a long time. This designation recognizes Quihi as a place of historical importance for future generations.

If we have no knowledge of our past, we have no direction for our future.

These historic buildings and sites greatly improve the quality of life, increase economic stability and help retain the unique history of Quihi, our sister community.

"PROGRAMMATIC AGREEMENT

Among

THE ADVISORY COUNCIL ON HISTORIC PRESERVATION, THE SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD, THE TEXAS STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER, AND SOUTHWEST GULF RAILROAD

Regarding

SOUTHWEST GULF RAILROAD COMPANY CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF THE PROPOSED SINGLE-TRACK RAILROAD IN MEDINA COUNTY, TEXAS

Executed December 18, 2015 And Amended and Executed August 12, 2016

IV. Resolution of Adverse Effects

A. Prior to the initiation of construction of any portion of the rail line that might adversely affect an historic property or archeological resource, SOR will develop, in consultation with the STB and the SHPO, an effects resolution plan (Resolution Plan) developed in accordance with 36 C.P.R. § 800.6 that will include, but not be limited to the following:

1. Strategies proposed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate effects of the undertaking with an emphasis on avoiding, where possible;

The current proposed DRP is in violation of the current 'agreed to items' in this Program Agreement (PA), since no routes are included in this DRP that **avoid** the historic buildings and archeologic sites.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this project, shows proposed construction of two (2) rail line options that **avoid** most of the historical buildings and sites in this area. These two EIS lines are located to the east of the lines described in this DRP. These two proposed lines **are possible** as documented in the EIS, however are not included in the current DRP.

Please accept our respectful request for you to enforce the following '*agreed to item*' "Strategies proposed to avoid, minimize, or mitigate effects of the undertaking with an **emphasis on avoiding**, where possible;" of the PA, by including the MCEAA Medina Dam Route, as identified in the EIS, as the option to **avoid** adverse effects of this proposed rail project.

The Castroville Conservation Society respectfully, but emphatically opposes the current DRP which proposes construction of a rail line through the middle of the Upper Quihi Rural Historic District. This rail line will prevent the UQRHD from becoming part of the National Register of Historic Places.

Again thank you for this opportunity to express our concerns. I will be glad to answer any questions and provide further information if requested.

The Mission, Vision and Activity Statements form the foundation of the Castroville Conservation Society and can be found on our webpage <http://castrovilleconservationsociety.weebly.com/>

Sincerely,
Patrick Conner

Digitally signed by Patrick Conner
Date: 2017.06.28 13:53:47 -05'00'

Tom Strickler

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210-379-9426 tom.strickler@sbcglobal.net



June 15, 2017

Diana Wood

Surface Transportation Board

Office of Environmental Analysis

395 E Street SW

Washington DC 20423

Dear Diana Wood,

Southwest Gulf Railroad (SGR) has submitted a Draft Resolution Plan (DRP) to your office requesting approval to build a railroad spur through the Upper Quihi Rural Historic District (UQRHD). I urge you to reject this DRP since a railroad in my opinion would endanger the historical structures in the area as well as jeopardize any future archaeological discoveries. I believe these adverse effects would happen in spite of any mitigating measures proposed by SGR.

Your office has already approved two alternative routes to SGR that would avoid the UQRHD. SGR should take your recommendation and thus preserve the unique history of rural Texas farm life for future generations.

Sincerely,

Tom Strickler

CC: Texas Historical Commission and Advisory Council on Historic Preservation

