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*To Medina County Environmental Action Association, Inc.*

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May 6, 2007

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Re: MCEAA Comments on Teleconference Meeting April 20, 2007  
STB Finance Docket 34284 Medina County TX  
Proposed Rail Line

Dear Ms. Rutson, Mr. Oaks, Ms. Dwin-Vaughn, and Ms. Harris:

Thank you all for your continued efforts and patience in this complex case. Although many comments, questions, and discussions have been submitted for consideration, there are other pertinent comments we would like to submit in the Section 106 process.

It is MCEAA's opinion that the Southwest Gulf Railroad's new relocation and mitigation measures for the Proposed Route (PR) still cannot compare with an eastern route because of the overall detrimental effects the very presence of this route has on the Quihi Rural Historic Landscape (QRHL). No matter how hard SGR tries to convince the Surface Transportation Board (STB), the fact remains that a railroad does not fit into Quihi's rural landscape. It is important to remember that this landscape must be preserved as much as possible in its original authentic condition. It must not be altered by the addition of SGR's proposed bridge needed for the crossing of the Quihi Creek, its flood plain and CR 365, regardless of the bridges length, height, and other trappings. All of the above detract from the aesthetic value and feeling of the rural landscape. None of the above belongs in this priceless, irreplaceable, one of a kind part of Texas and American History.

It must be noted that SGR's desire to relocate CR 365 to 'higher ground' is not done because it would be a better location for the road, but because SGR knows the road's original location adjacent to the Quihi Creek could not be utilized, nor could it be maintained, due to the lack of adequate clearance by the proposed bridge. More importantly, this re-location of CR 365 destroys the its authenticity, and CR 365's intended purpose and design by the early settlers to connect Quihi with Upper Quihi, as the area's population increased. Early settler's wagons were purposely driven through the creeks so that water would swell the wooden wheels and keep the iron rims tightly adherent to the wheels. This is yet another reason the historic location of this road should not be relocated.

SGR's counsel's April 18, 2007 letter inferring that the county would allow a portion of CR 365 to be relocated is a statement made in an attempt to mislead the STB, THC, and ACHP. The fact is that any county road alterations (except for shortening the road) can only be done with the entire Commissioner's Court approval. Road alterations must be discussed as an agenda item in a Commissioner's Court Meeting. Alterations of roads are not approved against opposition by the affected public, which is sure to be present in this instance.

SGR's relocation of the proposed route in the Lindsey property to spare the division of a prehistoric rock wall is a proposal that goes from bad to worse. This new location infringes on another prehistoric site. It is 41ME132, registered by T. Hester and B. Mangold. This site's location had erroneously been listed in the SDEIS as being within 1000 ft. of the MCEAA's MDA route, (Vol. I, page 5-44, Table 5.9-3). This site is actually closer to the proposed route, and the new proposed relocation of the PR (around the east end of the rock wall) brings it even closer.

SGR's new proposed relocation of the PR to the eastern side of CR 353 to avoid bisecting the Gerdes Family Heritage Ranch also causes other problems. This location now crosses the driveway access to property where eight individuals live, including 2 small children, soon to be three. Another home and a machine-shop-office complex access is also cut off. As the PR courses further northward and crosses CR 353 near its intersection with CR 354, it now crosses dangerously close to the Dittmar family home. This is a home which is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic homes, Resource 333, Vol II, page 54 of the SDEIS. Here a nocturnal derailment would not only destroy the home but would result in 4 fatalities.

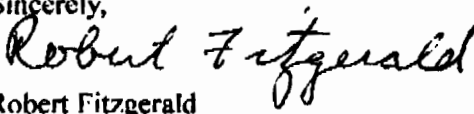
After evaluating all the data, it should be clear to all of the parties participating in the Section 106 process that the proposed route PR does not belong in the Quihi Rural Historic Landscape. An eastern route which avoids the area and which has already been recognized by SEA as being less environmentally disruptive in many aspects should be chosen.

If Vulcan Materials/SGR does not choose to utilize an eastern route for the rail lines construction, that will be their decision. The threat of an all truck route, with its known increased costs, is one likely not to materialize when all factors are considered.

The Proposed Route as well the eastern routes have been studied extensively and comments from consultants have been submitted. The fate of Quihi's Rural Historic Landscape is now in SEA, THC, and ACHP's hands. This fragile, rare, irreplaceable bit of Early American and Texas History must be preserved.

In closing, MCEAA members wish to extend our thanks to the STB, THC, ACHP, and their staffs for their patience and hard work devoted to this matter.

Sincerely,



Robert Fitzgerald

cc: Medina County Judge Jim Barden

cc: County Commissioner Pct 1 Ronnie Ulbrich

*MCEAA: Advoc. for your Home, Health, and Heritage*