

Texas Materials Group, located in Burnet County but owned by CRH headquartered in Dublin, Ireland is proposing a 27-mile-long rail line from Burnet to Lampasas. They petitioned the Surface Transportation Board in August of 2024 to waive the six-month pre-filing notice. There has been no notification to affected landowners or to the communities involved. The proposed “preferred” route would affect our property in Lampasas County – a beautiful 250-acre ranch along Sulphur Creek that was purchased by our family in 1992. This is our legacy for our grandchildren.

The Central Texas Hill Country has beautiful rolling hills but if you read the proposal submitted by Tom Wilcox and Texas Materials, they say it is “arid” with few people. The Hill Country is some of the most desirable land in the State of Texas with heavily wooded rolling hills, streams, creeks and the Colorado River located in the Edwards Plateau, conveniently located close to Austin, San Antonio, and Waco. I am enclosing pictures of some of our property and creek.

The proposed route of the rail would split our property, and we would not have access to the $\frac{3}{4}$ mile of creek frontage that we own. This would endanger our livelihood, our retirement, our way of life, our investment and our cattle. We will not be able to access the creek or this portion of our property as it is bound by water and other landowners. It will pass very near our house and barn.

This will have very negative consequences on our lives and our land – the value of our property will fall drastically.

We will not have access to our water for our cattle.

We will not have access for recreational use of Sulphur Creek or portions of our property - Fishing, swimming, hiking. Denying us access to our use of water is a very major concern.

We have leased the acreage next to us as long as we have owned our place, and this would not be possible with the proposed rail line in place. We could not move cattle from one place to the other. This will affect our grazing and leasing programs and our hay baling.

Our key points of concern:

Property rights and safety of our property – we have not given consent or even been notified of this proposed rail line. This train will pose safety risks including accidents, derailments, fires, and the risk of anyone accessing our property by just walking down the rail line.

Environmental Impact – noise, pollution and potential damage to the creek and local ecosystems as well as wildlife. We will not be able to access portions of our property nor

will be able to access our water – Sulphur Creek. We cannot be denied access to water on our property. The proposed line will cross the major highways 183 and 190.

Economic Impact – this quarry train and rail line will negatively impact our property values, declining property values would make it challenging for future generations to sell if needed – possibly rendering our property even “unsaleable” with a railroad track running through it and no access to water. We have worked hard on this property for over 30 years and planned to retire here. This rail line will destroy our investment and our retirement.

Quality of life – the quarry train and rail line will disrupt our rural lifestyle with constant noise, vibrations, and movement of a rumbling train through our peaceful countryside. It will pass very near our house and barn and will cause significant disturbance. We will not be able to water our animals, it will disrupt our grazing, it will disrupt our leasing of additional acreage. It will destroy outcroppings of rock along the creek where Native Americans camped and where we have found many arrowheads. It will disrupt a rock wall that runs the length of the property on the west side that was built by the Friars in the 1800’s.

We respectfully request that any Governmental Board or Elected Official consider our concerns and the concerns of all the affected property owners and community members. We ask that the Surface Transportation Board deny approval for the proposed quarry train line on our properties. We ask that Texas Materials Application be further investigated for blatant falsehoods – the area is not arid, it is not sparsely populated, they are not reestablishing a rail route, there would be an environmental impact. Most of the landowners in Burnet County had purchased these right of ways long ago. There are no right of ways in Lampasas County. There are no right of ways on our property. There are numerous misstatements in their filing.

We urge the Surface Transportation Board to prioritize the rights of the owners and residents of Burnet and Lampasas Counties. Prioritize our rights over the corporate interests of a company that is headquartered in Ireland. Please don’t let an Irish Company, or any Company for that matter, break the backs of central Texas residents for profit.

Our livelihood, our way of life is at risk – we beg you to help us stop this rail line.

Please contact:

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