

#E1-2686
R21

Date: January 15, 2007
To: Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington DC 20423
Attention: Rini Ghosh
STB Docket No. FD 34284

received
1/24/07

References:

- A. Supplemental Draft Environment Impact Statement
Finance Document No 34284
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company
Construction and Operation Exemption
Medina County, Texas
 - 1. Volume I – Executive Summary – Chapter 6 and appendices A & B
 - 2. Volume II – Appendices C – F
- B. Figure 5.1 Resource numbers & Survey Area Boundaries
Quihi Vicinity, Medina, Texas

My name is Henry Balzen, my wife's name is Arleen Balzen. We are very concerned about the Vulcan Quarry and the proposed and alternate railroad routes; as defined, in references A1 & A2. We live in upper Quihi and our residence is identified as #340 of reference B. The other house we own is my parents' homestead, which is identified as #75 of Reference B. As shown in figure 10 page 14 of Appendix F-1 of Reference A2, the route also has a very high impact on residence #217. This property belongs to Hugo Wurzbach; who owns property at the quarry site.

The particular route identified as the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Proposed Route in references A1 & A2 passes almost directly over my house, which is located on County Road 265 just north of FM 2676 (#340 of ref. B). Attachment A shows my house as #1. The proposed route passes completely through all of my property (see Attachment A). The shaded area shows the location of my property. The route passes between my two houses (#340 & #75 of ref. B). The house identified as #2 on Attachment A was my parents homestead where I grew up. It was built in the 1900's and purchased by my grandfather along with the property in 1937. House #3 (on Attachment A) is my daughter's house located within the same property. My house was built in 1994 as my retirement home which I had planned for 50 years.

In addition to a very high impact on my residence and property the MCEAA proposed route has several more negative aspects.

- 1. The route crosses two major roadways within approximately one half mile of each other (FM2676 & CR 265). Although CR 265 is a gravel country road it has a very high rate of traffic, primarily due to the Medina Oaks subdivision, which continues to grow.
- 2. The route runs between my two houses, which are only 300 yards apart.

3. County Road 265 is an "open range" road which means my cattle roam free across and on the road. My cattle pens and barn are all at house #2 of Attachment A.
4. The route crosses the creek at the point of greatest elevation change from the creek to the adjacent hill.
5. Another creek (as shown on Attachment A) west of CR265 on my property, not shown on your maps, will also have to be crossed.

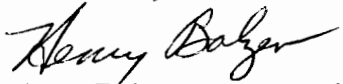
I request that you consider the following comments and /or suggestions for a combination MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative and SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route. The MCEAA route to be used until it intersects SGR's Modified Dam Route just south of FM 2676. This proposal offers several advantages.

1. There are not any residences in the direct path of the rail route as with the Proposed MCEAA route and the Eastern Bypass Route where it crosses FM 2676.
2. CR 265 does not have to be crossed.
3. The creek west of CR 265 noted on Attachment A does not have to be crossed because it merges with the other creek at house #75.
4. SGR's Modified Route passes through property owned by Mr. Wurzbach and Mr. Schweers (see noted area of Attachment A) who will financially benefit from the quarry because they both own property at the quarry site. The rail right-of-way should be a way for them to demonstrate support for their financial benefit of the quarry operation and to avoid major impact on their neighbors.

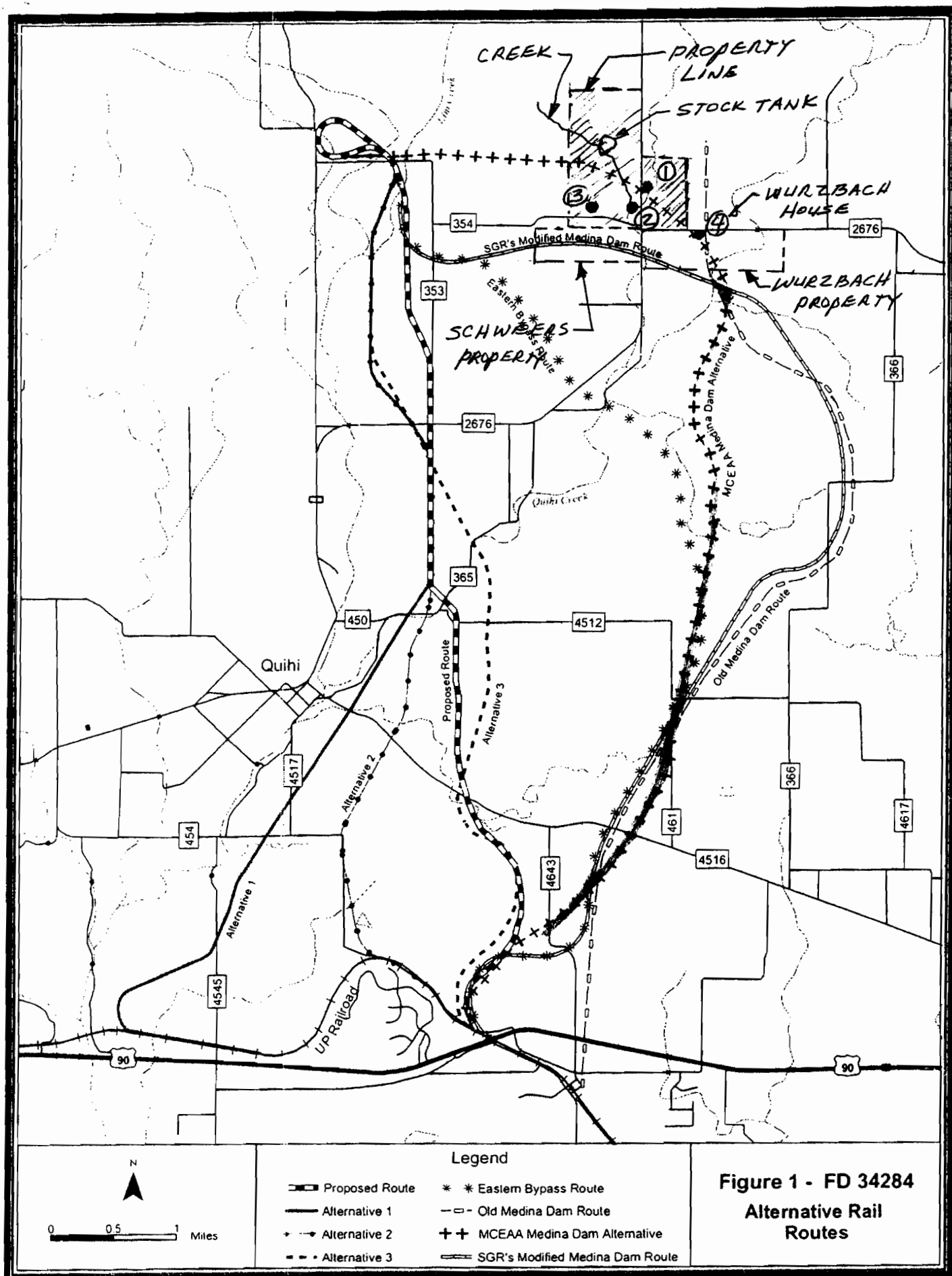
After review of the documents (ref. A1 & A2), I understand Vulcan's pursuit of their preferred route and I am in concurrence because it affects fewer landowners and agricultural property. It also provides the shortest route which would have the least contribution of train exhaust and dust pollution. Vulcan and SGR should continue to work in good faith as a "good neighbor" to minimize the impact on the existing residences, property and environment.

Your careful consideration of the above comments and proposal before your final route selection is appreciated. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Thank You,


Henry Balzen and
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Arleen Balzen



ATTACHMENT A

LETTER TO SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD