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April 11, 2025

Mr. Adam Assenza
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Subject: Formal Opposition to Burnet-Lampasas Rail Expansion (STB Docket No. [FD - 36815])

Dear Mr. Assenza,

I am writing to formally oppose the proposed rail project by Texas Materials Group in Burnet and Lampasas Counties due to its significant and irreversible environmental impacts. As a landowner that will be directly impacted by the proposed rail line, this project threatens the delicate ecological balance of our region and poses substantial risks to our local wildlife, water resources, and overall environmental health as well as access to life saving emergency services.

Impact on Local Ecosystems and Wildlife

Burnet County is home to a diverse range of flora and fauna, including several species of concern. The construction and operation of this rail line would lead to habitat destruction, fragmentation, and increased mortality rates for local wildlife. The increased noise, vibration, and pollution from rail traffic will disrupt nesting and breeding patterns of birds, including protected species. Our property is home to habitat for the Golden-Cheeked Warbler and Red-Tailed Hawk. Our property is covered in milkweed each April and supports the health and migration of the Monarch butterfly, which is being evaluated as a threatened species.

Threats to Water Quality and Aquatic Life

The proposed rail line's proximity to local creeks, watersheds, and aquifers raises serious concerns regarding water contamination. The seasonal creek running across my property flows into the Russell Fork and San Gabriel River. The runoff from construction activities

and potential fuel spills from train operations could introduce harmful pollutants into our waterways, endangering aquatic ecosystems and affecting drinking water supplies. The long-term consequences of such contamination would be detrimental not only to the environment but also to public health and agricultural sustainability in our communities.

Air and Noise Pollution Concerns

The increased rail traffic will generate significant amounts of air pollution from diesel-powered locomotives, contributing to higher levels of particulate matter and greenhouse gas emissions. Additionally, the continuous noise and vibrations from rail operations will negatively impact both residents and wildlife, disrupting natural behaviors and degrading the quality of life in our rural community.

Threats to Landowners and Rural Communities

The rail line would fragment agricultural and ranch lands, reducing property values and hindering wildlife movement.

Fire and Health Safety Concerns

As a landowner that will be affected by the proposed rail line, this could be a life or death situation as the proposed train will block our county road for access to emergency services. Fire trucks and ambulances will not be able to reach my property without delay, if a train is traveling (or stopped) on the track. The next closest alternate route would also be blocked by the rail line.

For the reasons outlined above, I strongly urge the STB to deny this rail proposal. The long-term environmental damage far outweighs any potential economic benefits. Instead, I encourage the exploration of alternative transportation solutions that do not come at the cost of our natural heritage, public well-being and direct safety of the community.

I appreciate your time and consideration of these serious environmental concerns. I look forward to your response and hope that you will take these issues into account when reviewing the feasibility of this project.

Thank you!

Sincerely,
Alicia Brunet
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