

May 2, 2006

Ms. Rini Ghosh
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

STB Finance Docket No. 34284
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company---
Construction and Operation Exemption
Medina County, Texas

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My husband's grandfather began building the family farm with the purchase of 220 acres of land in 1942. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyle of the family and the two brothers still working the farm, it has grown to about 1,200 acres that is shown in dark outline on the enclosed plat (a copy of Figure 1 attached to your Notice of Intent to Prepare Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement).

Currently, two of the brothers operate the farm as a partnership, which is the source of income for themselves, their families, and their parents. The farm was able to grow by family sacrifice and sizable investments in its development. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, a network of 10 and 12 inch underground pipes to distribute the water across the property, several booster pumps to increase the pressure, and four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems. These sprinkler systems travel across the land to distribute water efficiently and ensure that the corn, cotton, and milo, currently grown on this acreage, can survive. The investment for this irrigation system exceeds \$400,000.

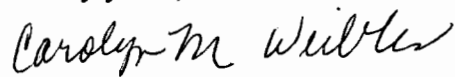
The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route pass through the farm in locations that would severely disrupt the irrigation systems and disrupt the livelihood on which the family depends. The production, if deprived of the irrigation system, would not yield adequate income for the brothers, their families, and their parents. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. The brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and my husband's parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of financial support.

However, if the board can look with favor on the suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, the large sprinkler irrigation systems remain unaffected and the family farm operation saved. Our suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along the west property boundary, curves eastward across the northwest corner and connects with either the Eastern Bypass Route or the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternate Route. It renders useless about 50 acres of land in the northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, the proposed route intersects the southeast corner of Mr. Russell

Mangold's land, the neighbor to the north, and affects approximately 30 acres his property. This route offers the railroad a course through the escarpment north of the family's property that is less severe in grade escalation. The route along the western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by the family and Russell Mangold is less detrimental then if the route passes through the middle of the family farm.

I ask the board to consider the proposed change in route, which if approved, saves the family's farm and the means of survival for my brother-in-laws and in-laws.

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Carolyn M. Weiblen".

Carolyn Weiblen
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Highland Village, Texas 75077
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