Appendix E

Notice of Intent to Prepare the SDEIS and Related Correspondence

Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplement Draft
Environmental Impact Statement

36813 SERVICE DATE – MARCH 13, 2006
SEA

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

STB Finance Docket No. 34284

Southwest Gulf Railroad Company – Construction and Operation Exemption – Medina County, TX

ACTION: Notice of Intent to Prepare a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

SUMMARY: This Notice discusses the environmental review process conducted thus far for this proceeding and the basis for determining that a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement is needed; the scope of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement; and the remaining steps necessary to conclude the environmental review process.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Ms. Rini Ghosh, Section of Environmental Analysis, Surface Transportation Board, 1925 K Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20423-0001, or by phone at (202) 565-1539. Assistance for the hearing impaired is available through the Federal Information Relay Service (FIRS) at 1-800-877-8339. The website for the Surface Transportation Board is www.stb.dot.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

Background: On February 27, 2003, Southwest Gulf Railroad Company (SGR) filed a petition with the Surface Transportation Board (Board) pursuant to 49 U.S.C. 10502 for authority to construct and operate a new rail line in Medina County, Texas. The proposal involves the construction and operation of approximately seven miles of new rail line from a Vulcan Construction Materials, LP (VCM) proposed limestone quarry to the Union Pacific Railroad Company rail line near Dunlay, Texas. The Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) issued a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (Draft EIS) on November 5, 2004, for public review and comment. The Draft EIS evaluated the potential environmental impacts that could result from SGR's proposed rail line construction and operation, four alternatives to SGR's proposed rail line (including the No-Action Alternative) and recommended mitigation that could be undertaken to reduce the potential impacts identified.

In response to the Draft EIS, SEA has received approximately 120 written comment letters to date,[1] as well as 75 oral comments submitted at two public meetings

[1] Although the official deadline for submitting comments was January 10, 2005, SEA has continued to receive comment letters that were postmarked after that date. In the interests of providing all parties with ample opportunity to participate in the environmental review process, SEA is considering all comments received to date. These

held in Hondo, Texas, on December 2, 2004 (SEA has considered each time a commenter spoke as one comment, even though several commenters spoke multiple times).

SEA has carefully reviewed all comments received, as well as additional information about the project proposal submitted by SGR, and has decided to prepare a concise Supplemental Draft EIS (SDEIS) that focuses on three specific matters. The SDEIS will contain a discussion of the following: (1) evaluation of three alternative rail routes that were not studied in detail in the Draft EIS and a comparison of these three alternative routes to the four rail routes previously studied in the Draft EIS; (2) a discussion of the progress of additional historic property identification efforts; (3) and the additional noise analysis that SEA will perform, based on updated operational data (that trains may operate during nighttime hours) provided by SGR. Below, we discuss the following: (1) the environmental review process for this proceeding thus far and the rationale for determining that a SDEIS is needed; (2) the scope of the SDEIS; and (3) the remaining steps in the environmental review process.

Background of the Environmental Review Process to Date

Under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq*. (NEPA), the Board must consider the environmental impacts of actions requiring Board authorization and complete its environmental review before making a final decision on a proposed action. SEA is the office within the Board that carries out the Board's responsibilities under NEPA and related environmental laws and regulations, including the Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing NEPA at 40 CFR Part 1500, the Board's environmental regulations at 49 CFR Part 1105, and the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, 16 U.S.C. 470.

SEA began the environmental review of SGR's proposal by consulting with appropriate Federal, state, and local agencies, as well as with SGR, and conducting technical surveys and analyses. Due to substantial early public interest in SGR's proposal, SEA conducted an informational Open House in Hondo, Texas, on June 12, 2003, and received over 100 comment letters in response to the Open House, which raised concerns regarding potential environmental impacts.

SEA reviewed the comments received and continued to conduct technical studies, which included the identification of historic properties in the project area. SEA also initiated consultation with the Texas Historic Commission (THC), in accordance with the regulations implementing Section 106 of NHPA at 36 CFR Part 800 and identified several consulting parties to the Section 106 process.

On October 10, 2003, SEA issued a Preliminary Cultural Resources Assessment report to the then-identified Section 106 consulting parties for review and comment. The report summarized the historic properties identified in the project area, which included a potential historic district, and set forth SEA's preliminary conclusions and

---

comments have been placed in the public record for this proceeding and are available in the Environmental Correspondence section of the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov.

recommendations regarding the cultural resources in the proposed project area. The THC, the consulting parties, and other individuals submitted comment letters in response to the report.[2]

Based on the nature and content of the numerous public and agency comments received, SEA determined that the effects of the proposed project on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial, and that thus, pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.27(b)(4), preparation of an EIS would be appropriate. On January 28, 2004, SEA issued a Notice of Intent to Prepare an EIS and Draft Scope of Study for the EIS (Draft Scope) for public review and comment. SEA received approximately 100 comment letters in response to the Draft Scope. SEA reviewed and carefully considered the comments in preparing the Final Scope of Study for the EIS (Final Scope), which was issued on May 7, 2004. SEA then continued to conduct appropriate studies and analyses for the environmental review of SGR's proposed project.

Additional cultural resources identification efforts were conducted. Through these efforts, SEA identified a potential rural historic landscape in the project area. In consultation with the THC and SGR, SEA developed a draft Programmatic Agreement to mitigate potential effects on cultural resources in the area, which SEA included in the Draft EIS for public review and comment.

As stated above, SEA issued the Draft EIS for public review and comment on November 5, 2004. In the Draft EIS, SEA evaluated the environmental effects of the proposed rail line construction and operation for the following impact categories, as identified in the Final Scope: transportation and traffic safety; public health and worker health and safety; water resources; biological resources; air quality; geology and soils (including karst features); land use; environmental justice; noise; vibration; recreation and visual resources; cultural resources; and socioeconomics. SEA also studied the potential cumulative effects and indirect effects that could be caused by the proposed project. The alternatives that SEA studied in depth included four potential rail alignments (the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3) and the No-Action Alternative (which SEA defined as the use of trucks to transport limestone from VCM's quarry to the UP rail line, based on SGR's statements that VCM would transport the material by truck if SGR's rail line were not built).[3]

While some of the commenters to the Draft EIS expressed support for SGR's proposed project, the majority of the commenters expressed opposition to the project and raised concerns about the Draft EIS. The comments covered the following topics:

---

[2] The report was also made publicly available by posting on the Board's website.

[3] In prior documents, SEA did not capitalize the terms Proposed Route and No-Action Alternative. For the sake of clarity and to establish uniformity with the other alternatives being discussed in this proceeding, SEA has decided to capitalize these terms in this and future documents.

- Allegations that the Draft EIS is inadequate and requests for an SDEIS to be prepared.
- General statements of opposition or support for the project.
- Concerns regarding potential air quality impacts.
- Requests that other alternative rail routes be studied (specifically, that an alignment that uses part of the old Medina Dam rail route in the area would be reasonable and feasible).
- Allegations that use of trucks to transport limestone from the quarry to the UP rail line would not be feasible, and that thus, SEA has improperly defined the No-Action Alternative.
- Concerns regarding potential impacts to water and water-associated resources (such as the Edwards Aquifer, floodplains and flooding impacts, groundwater, the Medina Lake Dam, stream crossings, surface waters, water supplies, wells, and wetlands).
- Concerns regarding potential impacts to biological resources in the area.
- Questions regarding how SGR could be considered a common carrier and questions about condemnation of private properties.
- Concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural resources.
- Concerns regarding potential cumulative impacts (i.e. combined impacts from SGR's rail line construction and operation and other projects in the area).
- Concerns about the potential impacts to pipelines in the area.
- Concerns about indirect impacts (i.e. impacts that would be caused by the proposed rail line construction and operation but that would be felt later in time or beyond the proposed project area).
- Concerns about impacts to karst features.
- Concerns about impacts to existing land uses.
- Requests to consider VCM's quarry and SGR's rail line as connected actions (i.e. as combined components of one overall proposed action).
- Questions regarding SGR's plans to maintain the rail line and the rail line right-of-way.
- Requests for more-detailed maps and graphics.
- Requests for additional mitigation.
- Concerns about potential noise impacts.
- Questions regarding the details of SGR's proposed train operations.
- Requests for more detailed information about the construction and engineering of the proposed rail line.
- Allegations that SEA has not been sufficiently responsive to the public.
- Questions regarding the purpose and need for SGR's proposed project.
- Concerns regarding potential impacts to recreational and visual resources.
- Concerns regarding potential at-grade crossings and potential safety impacts.
- Concerns regarding potential socioeconomic impacts.
- Concerns regarding potential impacts to prime farmland soils.
- Concerns regarding impacts to local traffic and transportation.

- Concerns regarding impacts from an increase in truck traffic on area roadways.
- Concerns about potential vibration impacts.
- Allegations that SEA's field studies and methodology were inadequate.

The comments received included those from some of the Section 106 consulting parties regarding the results of the cultural resources analysis in the Draft EIS. Particular concern was expressed by the THC and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation regarding the need to further identify the potential rural historic landscape that had been discussed in the Draft EIS and to look at additional rail alternatives that could potentially avoid historic properties near Quihi, Texas. As a result of these consultations, SEA determined that a separate study of the rural historic landscape was warranted. The study is currently ongoing.

In order to respond to and to better assess all the comments to the Draft EIS, SEA requested and received additional information from SGR.[4] In particular, SEA requested information regarding how SGR had developed the four potential rail alignment routes that SEA studied in depth in the Draft EIS (the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3) and whether SGR had studied the feasibility of rail routes that are farther to the west or farther to the east of those four alignments and that could potentially bypass the Quihi area.

The Development of Rail Line Alternatives. In response to SEA's request, SGR submitted information stating that initially 15 potential rail alignments had been considered, all of which were in the same general area as the four alignments considered in depth in the Draft EIS. According to SGR, these 15 alignments consisted of eight basic alignments and seven variations of those alignments. SGR explained that it had screened the alignments by using specific criteria including: avoidance of wetlands; topography (avoidance of grades in excess of 1%); avoidance of curves in excess of 4 degrees near the ends of the line and 3 degrees near the central part of the line; limiting the number of properties required to be crossed; and minimization of the number of properties that might have to be bisected. According to SGR, apart from the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3, none of the other initial routes fully satisfied these screening criteria.

SGR also asserted that other alternative alignments further to the east or to the west of the routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS, essentially bypassing the Quihi area, would not be reasonable or feasible. According to SGR, among other problems, a western bypass route would traverse areas containing a large number of historic resources and would also cross more floodplain than any of the four routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS.

---

[4] SEA's requests for information and SGR's responses can be found in the Environmental Correspondence section of the public docket for this proceeding and are also available on the Board's website.

As for an eastern bypass route, SGR stated that any such route would require a degree of cut and fill that would be much greater than the four routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS, making such a route infeasible. Nevertheless, in order to address the feasibility of an eastern bypass route, and to respond to SEA's specific questions regarding the determination of cut and fill volumes, SGR developed two eastern alignments (the Eastern Bypass Route and SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route) and provided SEA with a study of the cut and fill calculations for these two routes as compared to the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3.

One of these routes, SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route, had initially been developed prior to issuance of the Draft EIS. The Medina County Environmental Action Association (MCEAA), as well as several other parties, had submitted comments in response to the Draft Scope suggesting as an alternative rail alignment one that used a portion of railroad right-of-way utilized to facilitate the construction of the Medina Dam in the early 1900s. According to MCEAA, such an alignment would cause fewer potential environmental impacts than the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, or Alternative 3. In particular, MCEAA asserted that a route using a portion or portions of the old Medina Dam route would traverse less floodplain and impact fewer historic resources than the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, or Alternative 3.

In response to MCEAA's comments, SGR had submitted information stating that it had assessed several variations that would utilize part of the old Medina Dam route and connect the UP rail line to VCM's proposed quarry, including SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route. SGR stated at the time that none of these routes would be a reasonable and feasible, due to the amount of cut and fill that would be needed.

As discussed in the Draft EIS, SEA independently evaluated the information provided by SGR regarding potential routes that could use portions of the old Medina Dam route. Based on the information then available, SEA concurred that no routes using the old Medina Dam route appeared to be reasonable and feasible.

The cut and fill calculations submitted by SGR subsequent to issuance of the Draft EIS and SEA's preliminary review of that information supports SEA's initial conclusion that a rail route that traverses the area to the east of the alignments considered in depth in the Draft EIS would require greater amounts of cut and fill to build.

However, MCEAA has submitted comments challenging the accuracy of the cut and fill calculations prepared by SGR and suggests that another alternative rail route that would use a portion of the old Medina Dam route should now be studied. According to MCEAA, this other alternative (the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative), is a reasonable and feasible alternative that could require less cut and fill than the eastern routes developed by SGR. MCEAA also alleges that the grading and design considerations used by SGR to determine cut and fill volumes may not be appropriate.

Due to the controversy surrounding the cut and fill volumes here, SEA now believes that, in this proceeding, cut and fill volumes alone should not be a basis for

excluding a potential rail route from being considered reasonable and feasible. While cut and fill volumes may be important in distinguishing between routes or in determining which route is ultimately environmentally preferable, SEA will not rely solely on cut and fill volumes to eliminate a potential route from detailed study in this proceeding.

The Reasonable Range of Rail Line Alternatives for this Environmental Review Process. As discussed in the Draft EIS, as part of the environmental review process required by NEPA, an agency must evaluate all reasonable alternatives and the no-action alternative, and briefly discuss reasons for eliminating any unreasonable alternatives from further consideration.[5] The reasonable alternatives considered in detail, including the proposed action, should be analyzed in enough depth for reviewers to evaluate their comparative merits.[6] The goals of an action delimit the universe of the action's reasonable alternatives.[7] The objectives must not be defined so narrowly that all alternatives are effectively foreclosed, nor should they be defined so broadly that an "infinite number" of alternatives might further the goals and the project would "collapse under the weight" of the resulting analysis.[8] A reasonable range of alternatives need not include all possible alternatives as long as examples from a full spectrum of alternatives are covered.[9]

The primary purpose of SGR's proposed rail line construction and operation is to transport limestone from VCM's quarry to the UP rail line for shipments to markets in eastern Texas. Thus, in order to serve this purpose, a reasonable and feasible rail alignment would need to connect to the proposed rail loading track at the quarry site and to the existing UP rail line in a manner that would enable outbound shipments from the quarry to travel east.[10]

As discussed in the Draft EIS, SEA has already conducted an in-depth analysis of four potential rail alignments (Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3) that would meet SGR's stated purpose. With several reasonable and feasible rail line alternatives in existence, there is no need at this point to study alternative routes that would clearly have the potential for causing greater environmental impacts.

---

[5] 42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)(iii).

[6] See 40 CFR 1502.14.

[7] Citizens Against Burlington v. Busey, 938 F.2d 190, 195 (D.C. Cir. 1990).

[8] Id. at 196. See also Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning CEQ's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations, 46 Fed. Reg. 18026 (1981) (Forty Questions), Question 1.

[9] See Forty Questions, Question 1.

[10] See SGR's Petition for Exemption filed with the Board on February 27, 2003 and letter from SGR to SEA dated May 4, 2004 (Environmental Correspondence Tracking Number #EI-793).

Thus, any alignment that is less environmentally preferable than the four routes identified above would not be reasonable and feasible. Moreover, due to the potential impacts to transportation and traffic safety that would be associated with constructing a grade separated crossing of U.S. Highway 90,[11] a reasonable and feasible rail line alternative would need to connect to the UP rail line north of U.S. Highway 90. Also, because of the associated increase in potential environmental impacts from an increase in the length of the rail line (air quality impacts; transportation and traffic safety impacts; land use impacts; and impacts to biological resources), an alignment that would be significantly longer than the reasonable and feasible alternatives already studied need not be developed.

Based on all information to date, and the above-discussed criteria, SEA determines that the full spectrum of alternative rail routes for this proceeding should include the following: (1) rail alignments that traverse directly through the Quihi area (the central corridor); (2) rail alignments that bypass the Quihi area to the east (eastern corridor); (3) and rail alignments that bypass the Quihi area to the west (western corridor). The four alternative rail routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS constitute a reasonable range of alternatives for the central corridor and no further routes in this corridor need to be studied. SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route, the Eastern Bypass Route, and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative constitute a reasonable range of alternatives for the eastern corridor.[12] Furthermore, any western bypass route that is not significantly longer than the four routes studied in the Draft EIS would pass through more floodplain area and would impact a large number of historic resources (including historic resources in the New Fountain, Texas area).[13] Therefore, any such route would be less

---

[11] According to the Texas Department of Transportation's San Antonio District Highway Map for 2004 (2004 Map), the Annual Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for U.S. Highway 90 between Castroville, Texas and Dunlay, Texas was 12,900 vehicles and the ADT for U.S. Highway 90 in Hondo, Texas was 16,400 vehicles. Thus, at a minimum, construction of a grade separated crossing of U.S. Highway 90 would cause traffic flow disruptions much greater than construction of the four routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS. Farm to Market Road 2676, the one state road that would be crossed by the Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, or Alternative 3, had an ADT of between 660 vehicles to 1050 vehicles in the project area, according to the 2004 Map.

[12] MCEAA has asserted that the other deviations that SGR initially studied for an alignment that would use part of the old Medina Dam route as well as the original Medina Dam route itself need to be studied further (see letter from MCEAA to SEA, dated October 5, 2005, Environmental Correspondence Tracking Number #EI-1698). However, MCEAA has not shown that SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route, the Eastern Bypass Route, and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative do not constitute a reasonable range of routes in the eastern corridor. Moreover, the original Medina Dam route on its own would not meet the purpose and need for SGR's rail line, since it does not connect to VCM's proposed quarry.

[13] SEA has not approximated the length that such a route would need to be (because no such route has been developed). However, from a review of the Federal

environmentally preferable than the four routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS and SEA is excluding any such route (though no such route has been developed to date) from further consideration.

In short, SEA believes that there are currently three alternative rail routes that have been developed in this proceeding (SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route, the Eastern Bypass Route, and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative) that are potentially reasonable and feasible but have not yet been studied in depth. These alternatives warrant study in a supplemental EIS.[14] Therefore, SEA will issue for public review and comment an SDEIS studying these three routes. The attached Figure 1 is a map showing the three additional routes to be studied in the SDEIS, as well as the four rail routes assessed in depth in the Draft EIS (Proposed Route, Alternative 1, Alternative 2, and Alternative 3) and the old Medina Dam route (included for reference). No other alternative rail alignments will be studied in the SDEIS.

Scope of the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement

The primary purpose of the SDEIS will be to provide the public with an opportunity to review and comment on SEA's analysis of SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route, the Eastern Bypass Route, and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative. Thus, the SDEIS will be a focused document, containing an appropriate analysis of these three alternative rail routes and a comparison to the four routes previously studied in detail. The SDEIS will also contain a discussion of the rural historic landscape study, which SEA is currently conducting to assess historic resources in the project area, and a discussion of additional noise analysis that SEA will be performing, based on updated operational data (that trains may operate during nighttime hours) recently provided by SGR.

While comments to the Draft EIS have requested that a SDEIS be prepared to address other issues, SEA believes that the majority of the comments to the Draft EIS can be appropriately responded to in the Final EIS, which will be issued after the conclusion of the comment period in the SDEIS (see below for more detail) and no additional public review and comment is required prior to responding to these comments in a Final EIS. Commenters need not resubmit the comments they made to the Draft EIS; the Final EIS will contain responses to all comments that have been received to date, as well as comments on the SDEIS.

Emergency Management Agency's floodplain map for Medina County, it appears that any western bypass route that would cross a comparable amount of floodplain to the alternative rail routes under consideration would need to connect to the UP rail line many miles to the west of the quarry, which would significantly increase the line's length.

[14] See (Forty Questions), Question 29b.

The CEQ regulations implementing NEPA do not require that formal scoping activities be undertaken to determine the scope of study for a supplement.[15] While the Board's environmental regulations at 49 CFR 1105.10(a)(5) indicate that preparation of a draft scope of study for public review and comment and then a final scope of study that takes into consideration the comments received on the draft scope may be appropriate for a supplemental EIS, because the scope of the SDEIS has been well-defined by the environmental review process to date, such scoping activities need not be undertaken here.

Alternatives considered in detail must be examined in a manner that allows reviewers to compare them equally.[16] Thus, the scope of analysis for SGR's Modified Medina Dam Route, the Eastern Bypass Route, and the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative in the SDEIS will be the same as the scope of analysis for the alternatives considered in depth in the Draft EIS, as defined by the Final Scope, issued on May 7, 2004. This will include analysis of the following resource areas: transportation and traffic safety; public health and worker health and safety; water resources; biological resources; air quality; geology and soils (including karst features); land use; environmental justice; noise; vibration; recreation and visual resources; cultural resources; and socioeconomics. The SDEIS will also provide a comparison of the three eastern routes to the rail routes studied in depth in the Draft EIS.

The Remaining Steps in the Environmental Review Process

Upon its completion, the SDEIS will be made available for public and agency review and comment for at least 45 days. After the close of the comment period on the SDEIS, SEA will review all comments. Then SEA will issue a Final EIS that responds to comments on the Draft EIS and the SDEIS, discusses any additional analysis, and presents SEA's final recommendations to the Board. After issuance of the Final EIS, the environmental review process will be completed.

The Board then will issue a final decision in this proceeding. In reaching a final decision either to approve SGR's proposal, to deny SGR's proposal, or to approve SGR's proposal with conditions, the Board will take into consideration the Draft EIS, the SDEIS, the Final EIS, and all environmental comments that are received.

A paper copy of the entire SDEIS will be sent to parties on the Board's official service list for this proceeding, which includes parties of record, Federally-recognized tribes, Federal, state and local agencies, elected officials, representatives of organizations, and Section 106 consulting parties. The SDEIS will also be posted on the Board's website and copies will be made available in libraries in the vicinity of the project area.

---

[15] See 40 CFR 1502.9(c)(4) ("Agencies shall prepare, circulate, and file a supplement in the same fashion (exclusive of scoping) as a draft and final statement unless alternative procedures are approved by the Council").

[16] See 40 CFR 1502.14(b).

SEA is sending a copy of this Notice to all persons on SEA's environmental mailing list, which is a compilation of local area residents and other individuals who have expressed interest in the environmental review process for this proceeding. Individuals on this environmental mailing list who would like to remain on the mailing list and to receive a paper copy or an electronic copy of the SDEIS are requested to complete and return the enclosed postcard. Those individuals who do not return the enclosed postcard will be removed from the environmental mailing list. If you are not now on and would like to be added to SEA's environmental mailing list for this proceeding, please contact Rini Ghosh at (202) 565-1539.

By the Board, Victoria Rutson, Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis

Vernon A. Williams
Secretary

Related Correspondence

Correspondence for Appendix E

Please visit the Board's website at www.stb.dot.gov to see additional correspondence for this proceeding, including additional letters received subsequent to issuance of the Notice of Intent to Prepare the Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Go to "Environmental Matters," then click on "Environmental Correspondence," and then search the correspondence under "FD 34284."

Environmental Correspondence Tracking Letter Number	Name of Sender	Date of Letter	Page Number
#EI-1946	Sean Nooner	undated	1
#EI-1960	Jimmy Hoog	undated	2
#EI-1990	Harold Weiblen	4/12/2006	3
#EI-1994	Nelson and Paulette Martin	4/24/2006	6
#EI-2001	Debbie Weiblen	4/26/2006	7
#EI-2002	Michael Weiblen	4/26/2006	10
#EI-2003	Judith Weiblen	4/27/2006	13
#EI-2004	Glenn Weiblen	4/27/2006	16
#EI-2005	Joey Weiblen	4/26/2006	19
#EI-2023	Sue Whiteside	undated	22
#EI-2030	Anthony Weiblen	5/2/2006	23
#EI-2038	Carolyn Weiblen	5/2/2006	26
#EI-2047	Jacque Conrad	5/15/2006	29
#EI-2060	Ethel Martin	5/12/2006	30
#EI-2094	Melinda Weiblen	4/27/2006	31
#EI-2097	Jimmy Dixon	undated	34
#EI-2111	Linda Gunn	5/25/2006	35
#EI-2311	Mike Krusee, Texas House of Representatives	6/5/2006	36
#EI-2348	Rebecca Suttles	6/9/2006	37
#EI-2349	Barbara Gilliam	5/7/2006	38
#EI-2421	Rhiannon Smith	7/11/2006	39
#EI-2431	Betty Lawrence	undated	40
#EI-2432	Ben Lawrence	undated	41
#EI-2433	Keith Lawrence	undated	42
#EI-2434	Dora Horner	undated	43
#EI-2435	Dorothy Masters	undated	44
#EI-2482	Kathy Holzhaus	8/1/2006	45
#EI-2483	George Holzhaus	8/1/2006	46
#EI-2484	JoNell Tarvin	Undated	47
#EI-2512	Glenn and Mary Jo Schweers	Undated	48
#EI-2513	Wade Smith	7/11/06	50

#E1-1946
RG

FD 34284
received
3/23/06

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

Mr. Ghosh:

I am completely in favor of the Vulcan Materials Plant, proposed for Medina County. As a resident and businessman in the county, I look forward to the benefits to our community. I believe that this plant will be an economic burst for us and a good investment for Vulcan. Please feel free to contact me at 210-415-1598 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Sean Nooner

RECEIVED
SURFACE TRANSPORTATION
BOARD
2006 MAR 23 A 11:48
OFFICE OF ECONOMICS
DIRECTOR'S OFFICE

#EI-1960
RS

To:
Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

Received
4/3/06

March 21, 2006

Dear Mr. Ghosh:

Please move ahead with the approvals for the quarry and rail line in Medina County Texas. I live near the proposed quarry site and look forward to the jobs that it will create. Right now, many Medina residents travel to other counties every day for work. I am sure they would rather spend that time with their families.

As for the rail line, it obviously is a better choice for hauling rock from the quarry. If the choices are trucks and rail, the decision should be a no-brainer—rail. Rail is far safer and much cleaner.

Overall, the quarry and rail line are good for the future of Medina County. Please approve the rail line as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Jimmy Hoog

Jimmy Hoog

#E1-1990
RG

Received Via Fax 4/21/06

April 12, 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 family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land that is shown in yellow on the enclosed plat—a copy of Figure 1 attached to your Notice of Intent to Prepare Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement—since my grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

My brother, Fred and I are the present active farmers. Our partnership is the source of income for our parents and our families. We have through hard work and frugal lifestyles been able to purchase and install large pivoting water towers with arms from which irrigation water is served to 300 acres from a single pivot. The water is delivered through 10 inch and 12 inch pipe buried below plow depth from two Edwards Aquifer water wells. Several booster pumps powered by diesel motors furnish the pressure necessary to rotate the delivery arms and spray the water on the surface. We grow corn, cotton and milo.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through our farm in locations that would disrupt our irrigation systems in which we have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to us is the resulting destruction of our irrigated farm land upon which we depend for livelihood. Our production, if we are deprived of

our irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of our families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. We would be forced to find other means of support.

However, if your section can possibly look with favor on our suggested revision of the route shown by red line on the enclosed plat, our large circular watering systems will remain unaffected and our farming operation saved. Our suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along our west property boundary, curves eastward across our northwest corner and connects with either the Eastern Bypass Route or the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternate Route. It will render useless about 50 acres of land in our northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, Mr. Russell Mangold, our neighbor on the north will be intersected across his southeast corner affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of us that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along our western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by us, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as we would be if the route passes through the heart of our farm and our installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save our farm and our means of survival.

Sincerely yours,

Harold Walk

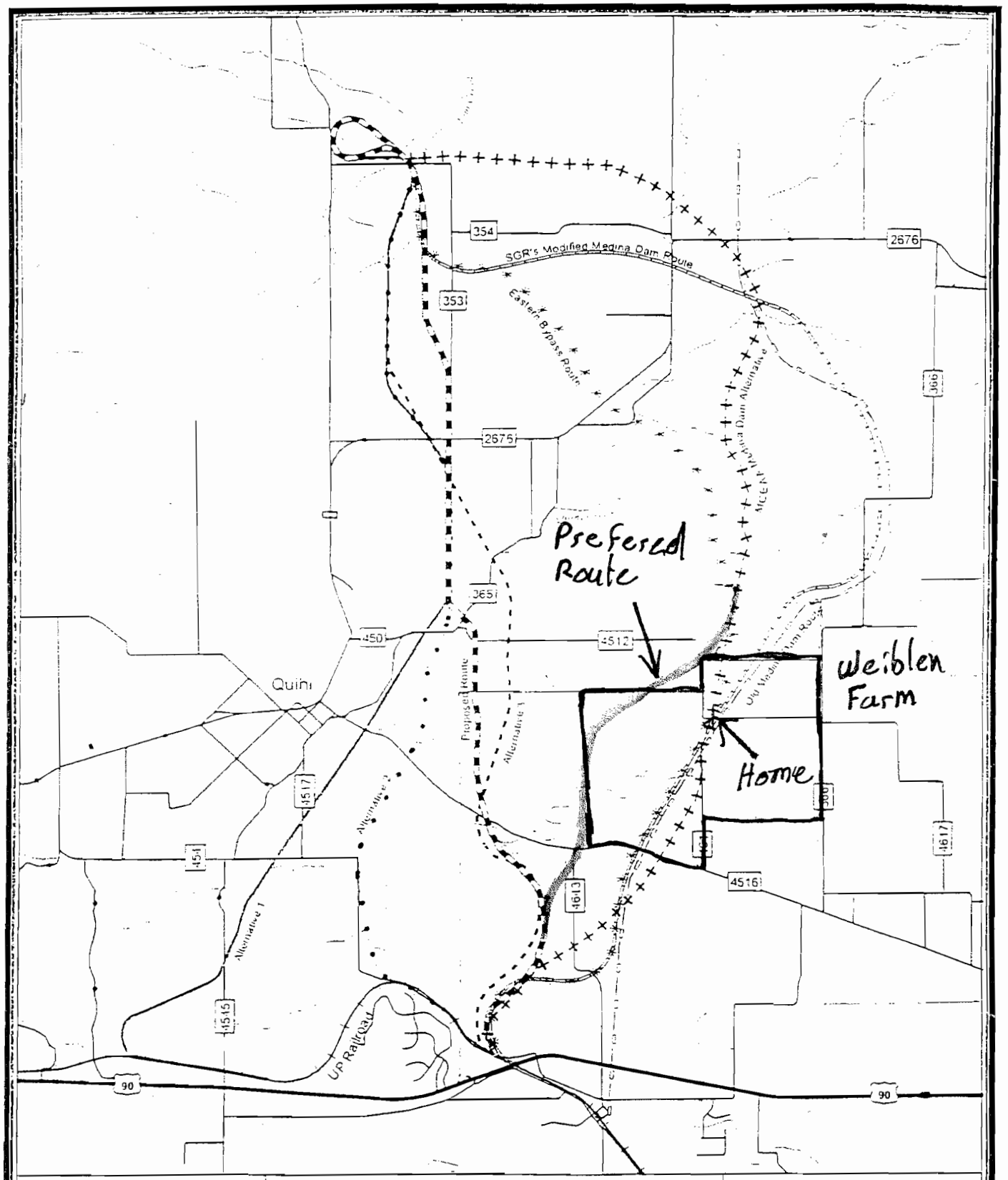

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#EI-1994
RG

Nelson and Paulette Martin
1596 County Road 366
Hondo, TX 78861
(830)538-3931

April 24, 2006

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

RE: Southwest Gulf Railroad Co.-Construction & Operation Exemption-Medina Co., TX(alternate rail routes for Vulcan Construction Materials, LP proposed quarry to Union Pacific RR Co. rail line near Dunlay, TX)

Dear Ms. Rini and Board Members,

This letter is a plead that you do not consider the old Medina Dam railway route as a possible route.
This land is our **only** inheritance to our children.
It was our inheritance. We are not monetarily rich and our land is our financial security.
The land has been in the family for over one hundred years and five generations have lived on this very land. We and our ancestors are the ones who cleared this land to use as farm land. We, including our children, have picked up rocks, built fences, cut down brush to make this land what it is today.
Having a railroad run through this area would cause the natural water runoff to be altered to down stream stock ponds needed for livestock and wildlife. The old dam railway did not affect any stock ponds because these ponds were constructed after the completion of the dam when the railway had already been discontinued and dismantled. Property was still in the hands of the first and/or second generation and the settlers were still living in their original homestead homes during that period.
It has been proven that this land holds water in areas where a tremendous amount of fill would have to be brought in order to build a railway which in turn would cause an interruption in the natural flow of water. At the time the dam railway was put in, the land affected was ranchland and not the farmland which it has become. The construction of the dam railway required an enormous amount of fill to raise the tracks above the boggy ground during rainy periods. The fill used from the old dam railway still can be found on our property scarring the landscape and damaging farm equipment while working near and among the remaining residue.
As landowners, we had to bear the burden of expense to remove old fill which was broken chunks of limestone. This had to be removed to allow water drainage across the field (from east to west). The track crossed our property from southwest to northeast. To this day our family is still picking up the residue left from the original railway. Spikes were found just this last month as we repaired an old fence line.
The construction of bridges and/or drainage along the railway will cause backup of excessive rainfall on our fields causing damage to the crops. Heavy rainfall drains across the length of our field (over a half mile) to down stream stock ponds and creeks.
Our neighbors, the Weiblens, have a very prominent farming operation in Medina County. If you choose this area to run the railway, you are taking away from the community a huge economical supporter. They have told us that if this railway were to run across their farmland interfering with their sprinkler systems, etc. They would most probably have to sell and move their operation. They and the community would have a lot to lose.
Please do not consider this old Medina Dam railway as a route for the Vulcan railway because it would impact too may livelihoods in this immediate area.
We are not opposed to Vulcan or the construction of the railway to Vulcan. Please consider one of the other routes which would not affect valuable farmland and drainage to valuable stock ponds and most importantly the devaluation of land which is our only means of retirement and inheritance to our children.

Sincerely,
Nelson Martin and Paulette Martin
Nelson and Paulette Martin

#E1-2001
RJ

April 26, 2006

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

received
5/2/06

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

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My husband's family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land 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 – since his grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of his brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for his parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of his parents and all six of his brothers and he while they were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, they have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo are currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through this farm in locations that would severely disrupt the irrigation systems in which they have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to them is the resulting destruction of their irrigated farm land, upon which much of his family depends for livelihood. Their production, if they are deprived of their irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of their families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. His brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and his parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

However, if your section can look with favor on the suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, their large sprinkler irrigation systems will remain unaffected and their farming operation saved. The suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along their west property boundary, curves eastward across their northwest corner and connects with either the Eastern Bypass Route or the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternate Route. It will render useless about 50 acres of land in their northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, Mr. Russell Mangold, their neighbor on the north

will be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of them that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along their western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by them, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of their farm and their installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save their farm and the means of survival for his brothers and his parents.

Sincerely yours,

Debbie Weiblen
2111 Royal Oaks Drive
League City, Texas 77573
281-538-1426

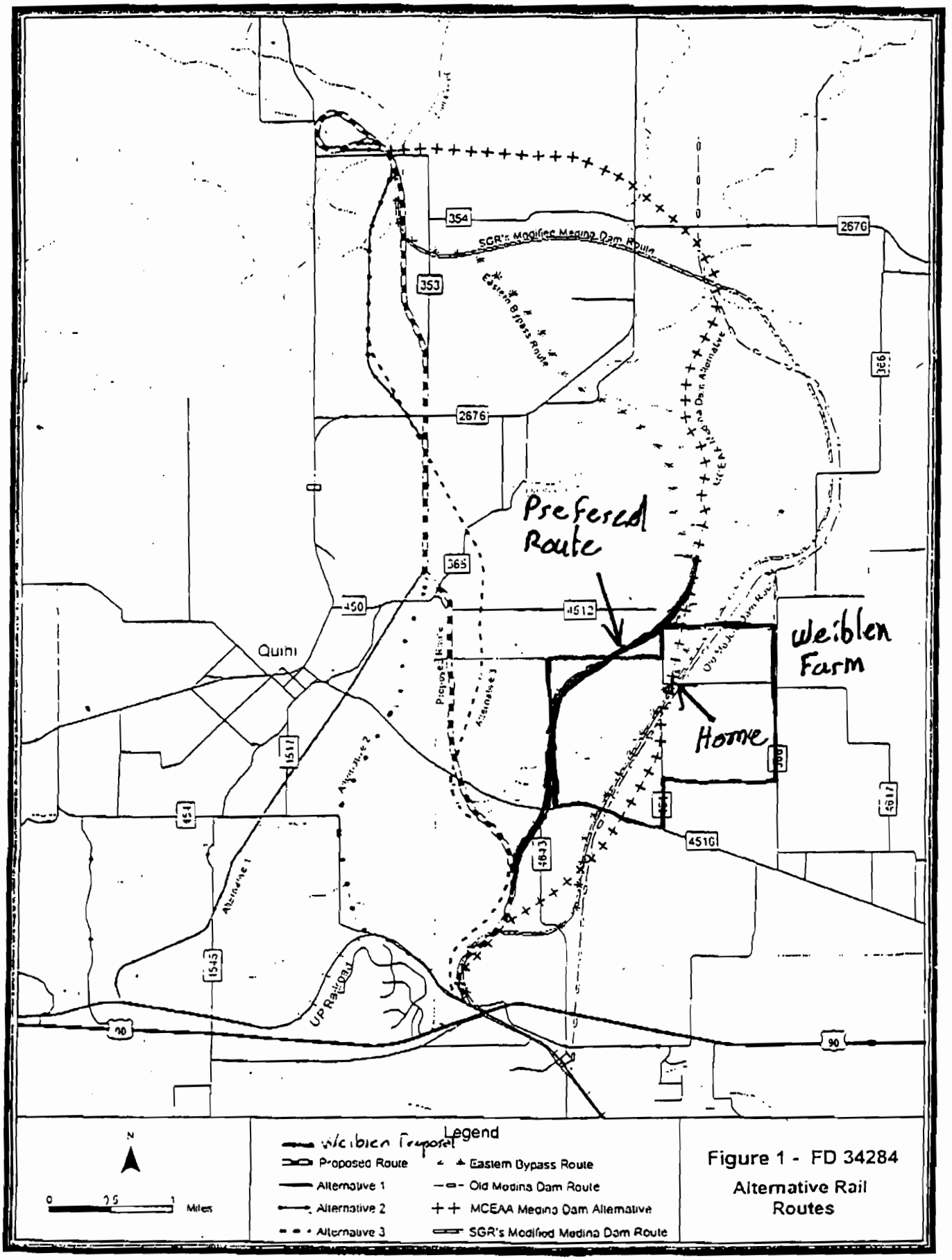

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#EI-2002
RS

April 26, 2006

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

Received
5/2/06

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

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land 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 – since my grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of my brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for my parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of our parents and all six of my brothers and I while we were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, we have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo is currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through our farm in locations that would severely disrupt our irrigation systems in which we have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to us is the resulting destruction of our irrigated farm land, upon which much of my family depends for livelihood. Our production, if we are deprived of our irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of our families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. My brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and my parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

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

be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of us that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along our western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by us, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of our farm and our installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save our farm and the means of survival for my brothers and my parents.

Sincerely yours,

Michael Weiblen

Michael Weiblen
175 CR 373
Rio Medina, Tx. 78066
830-931-3920

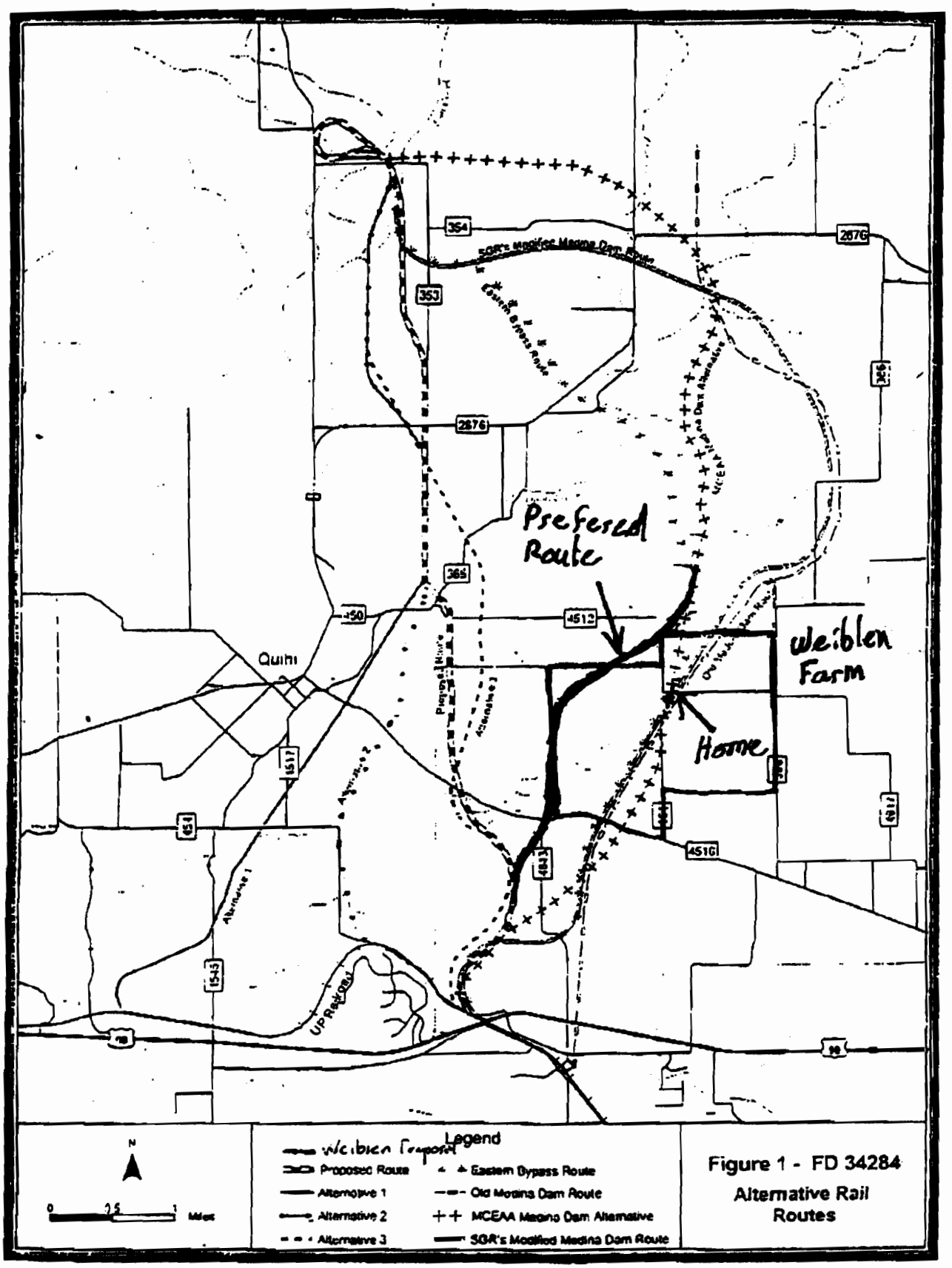

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#EI- 2003
RA

April 27, 2006

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

5/2/06

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

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My husband's family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land 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 – since his grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of his brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for his parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of his parents and all six of his brothers and he while they were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, they have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo are currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through this farm in locations that would severely disrupt the irrigation systems in which they have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to them is the resulting destruction of their irrigated farm land, upon which much of his family depends for livelihood. Their production, if they are deprived of their irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of their families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. His brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and his parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

However, if your section can look with favor on the suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, their large sprinkler irrigation systems will remain unaffected and their farming operation saved. The suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along their west property boundary, curves eastward across their northwest corner and connects with either the Eastern Bypass Route or the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternate Route. It will render useless about 50 acres of land in their northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, Mr. Russell Mangold, their neighbor on the north

will be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of them that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along their western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by them, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of their farm and their installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save their farm and the means of survival for his brothers and his parents.

Sincerely yours,

Judith Weiblen

Judith Weiblen
175 CR 373
Rio Medina, Tx. 78066
830-931-3920

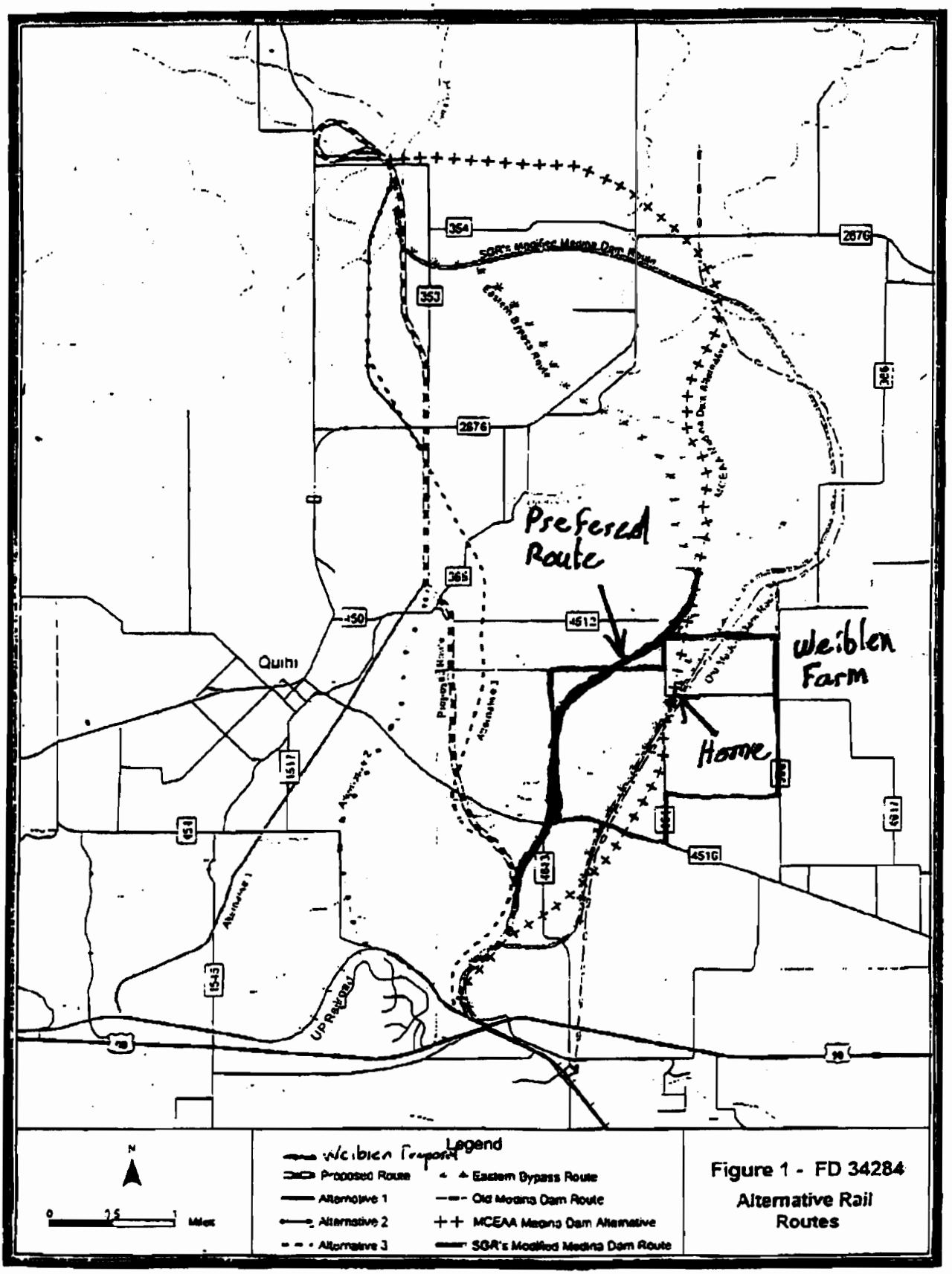

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#EI-2004
RS

April 27, 2006

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

received 5/2/06

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

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land 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 – since my grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of my brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for my parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of our parents and all six of my brothers and I while we were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, we have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo is currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through our farm in locations that would severely disrupt our irrigation systems in which we have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to us is the resulting destruction of our irrigated farm land, upon which much of my family depends for livelihood. Our production, if we are deprived of our irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of our families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. My brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and my parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

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

be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of us that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along our western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by us, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of our farm and our installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save our farm and the means of survival for my brothers and my parents.

Sincerely yours,

Glenn Weiblen
2520 FM 471 North
Castroville, Texas 78009
830-931-3049

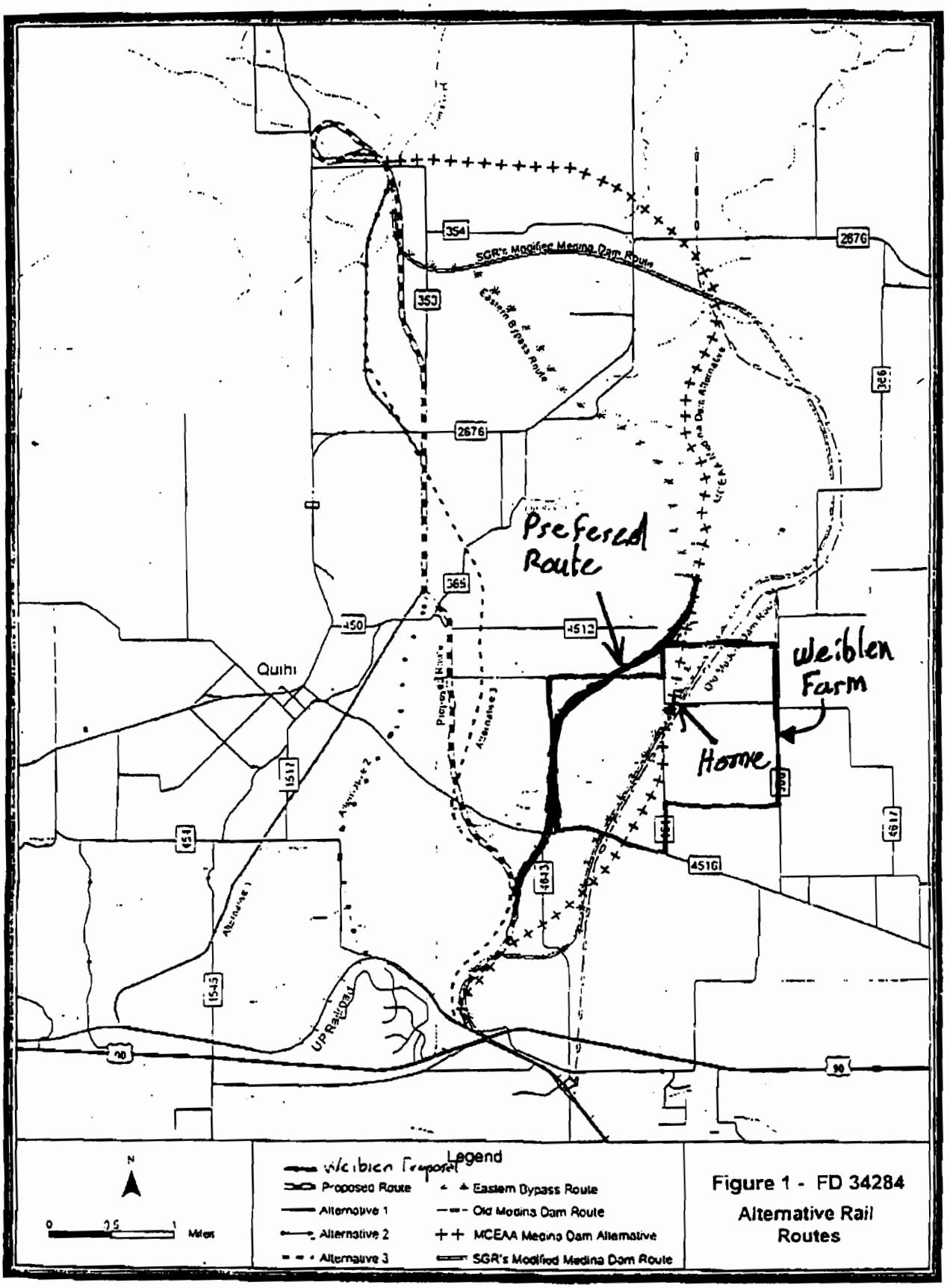

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#E1-2005
RZ

April 26, 2006

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

Received 5/2/06

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

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land 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 – since my grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of my brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for my parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of our parents and all six of my brothers and I while we were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, we have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo is currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through our farm in locations that would severely disrupt our irrigation systems in which we have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to us is the resulting destruction of our irrigated farm land, upon which much of my family depends for livelihood. Our production, if we are deprived of our irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of our families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. My brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and my parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

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

be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of us that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along our western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by us, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of our farm and our installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save our farm and the means of survival for my brothers and my parents.

Sincerely yours,

Joey Weiblen
2111 Royal Oaks Drive
League City, Texas 77573
281-538-1426

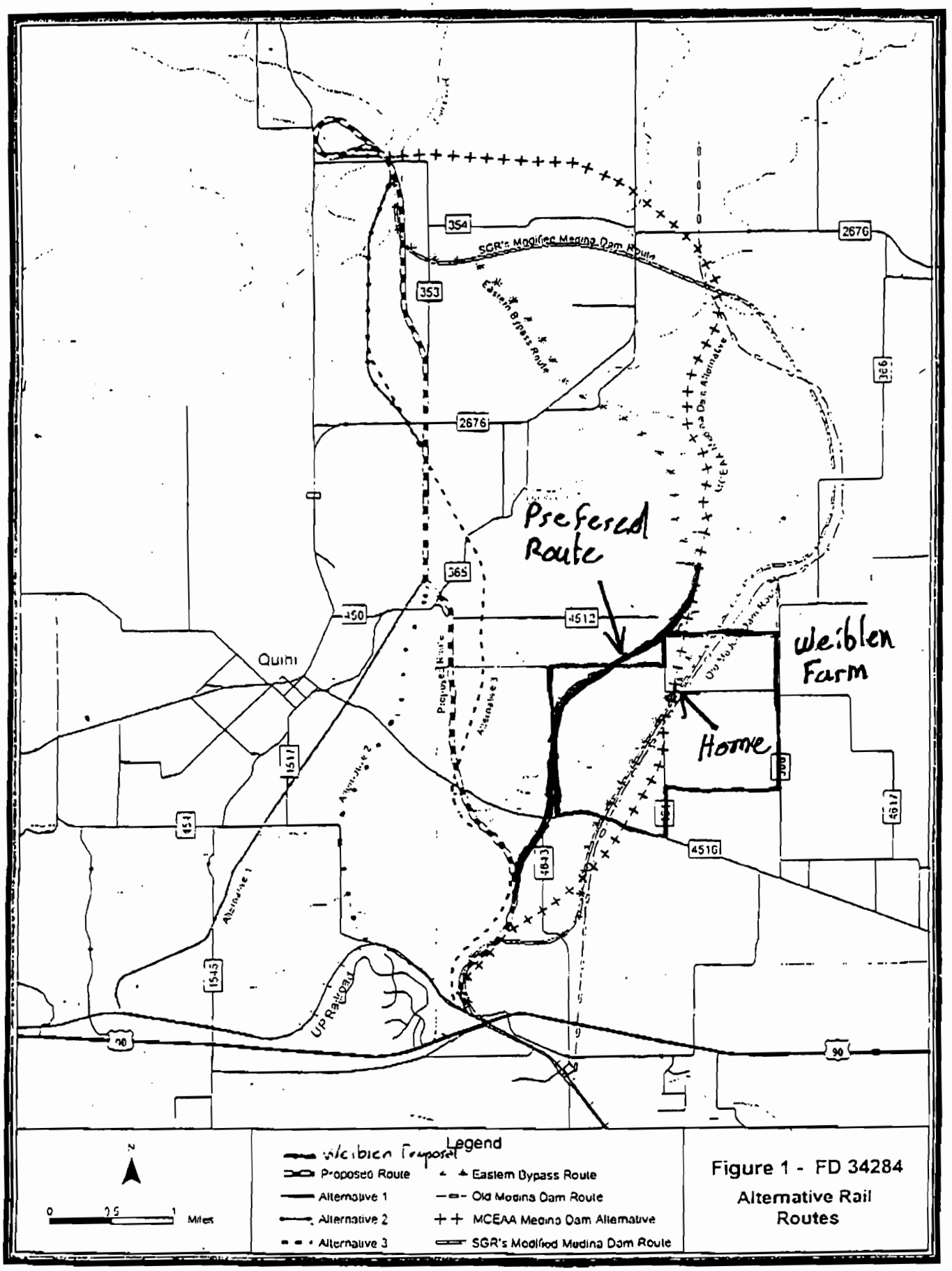

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#EI-2023
RS

Ms. Rini Ghosh
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
Finance Docket 34284
1925 K. Street
Washington, DC 20423

I am a member of the Schweers Historical Foundation near Quihi, Texas. I am strongly supportive of Vulcan's Materials project in Medina County, Texas.

Thank You,

Sue Whiteside
P.O. Box 6988
Tyler, Texas 75711
(903) 597-1935

#E1-2030
RY

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 grandfather began building our family farm with the purchase of 220 acres of land in 1942. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyle of our 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 my brothers operate the farm as a partnership, which is the source of income for themselves, their families, and my parents. The farm was able to grow by our family sacrificing and making 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 our farm in locations that would severely disrupt our irrigation systems and disrupt the livelihood on which my family depends. Our production, if deprived of the irrigation system, would not yield adequate income for my brothers, their families, and my parents. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. My brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and my 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 our suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, the large sprinkler irrigation systems remain unaffected and our 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 our property that is less severe in grade escalation. The route along our western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by my family and Russell Mangold is less detrimental then if the route passes through the middle of our family farm.

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

Sincerely yours,

Anthony Weiblen
2918 Darlington Drive
Highland Village, Texas 75077
972-317-5033

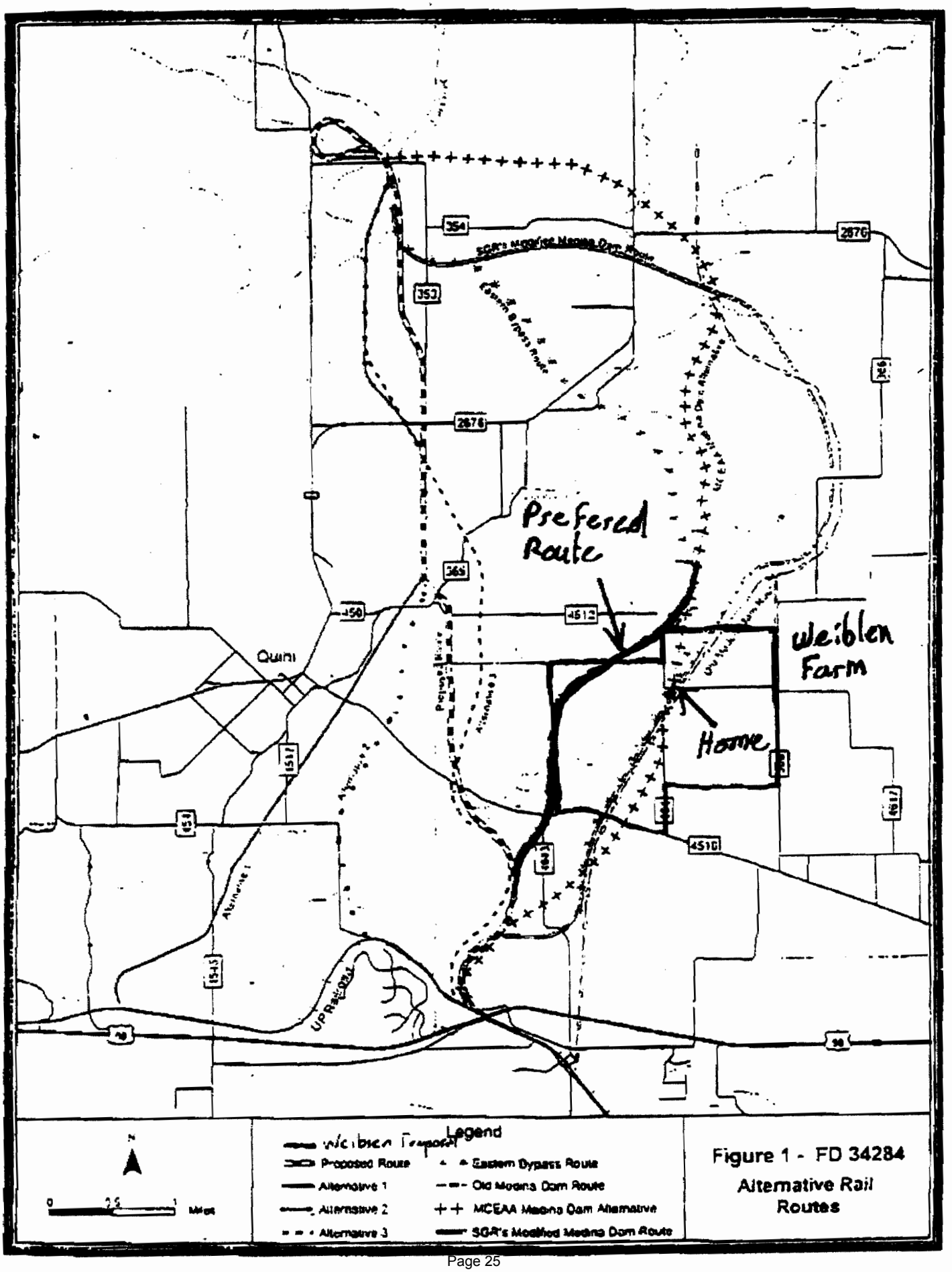

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#EI-2038
RS

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,

Carolyn M Weiblen

Carolyn Weiblen
2918 Darlington Drive
Highland Village, Texas 75077
972-317-5033

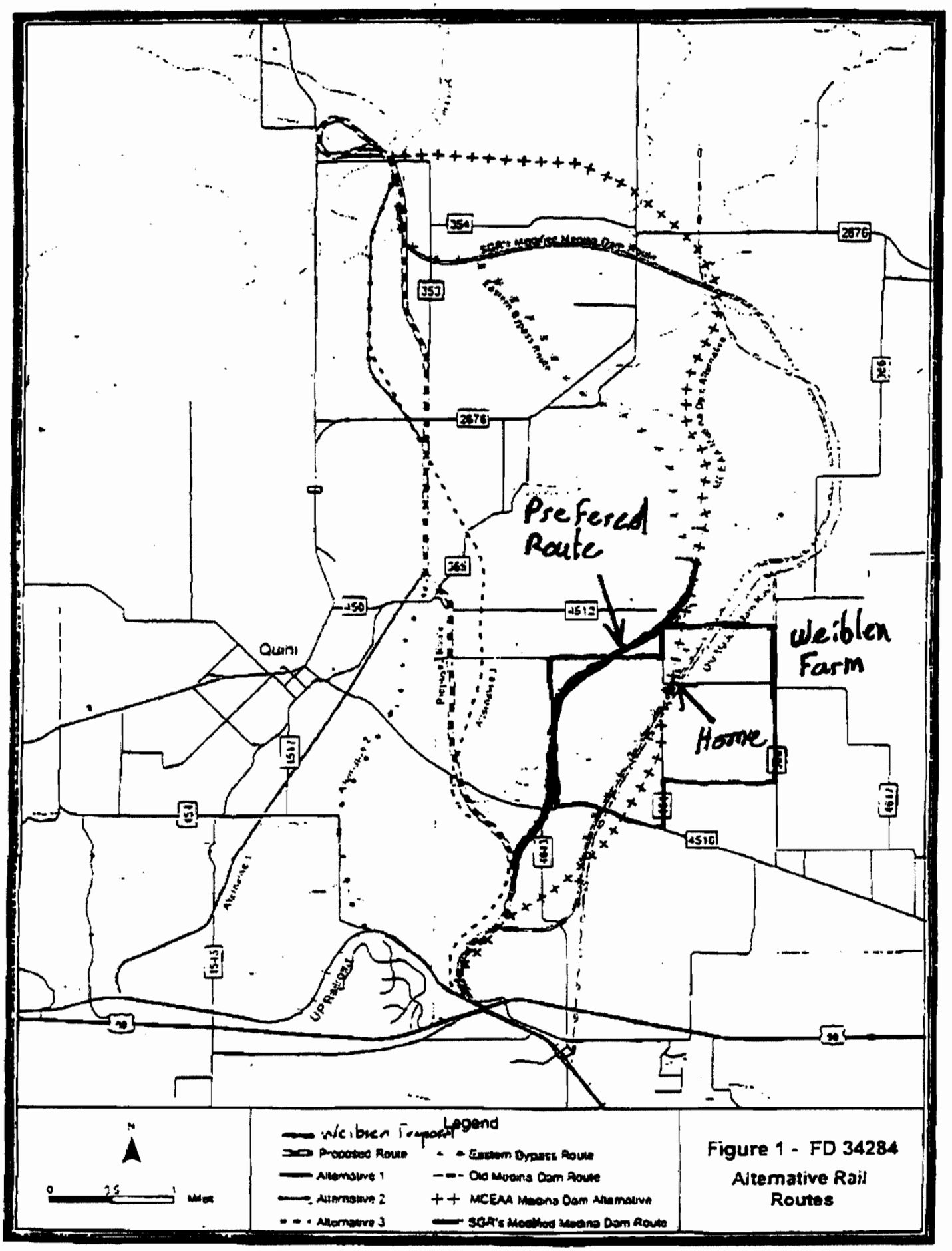

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

#E1-2047
RS

May 15, 2006

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

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34284
Southwest Gulf Railroad Company-
Construction and Operation Exemption – Medina County

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

I recently read, with amazement, letters E1990, E1994 and others by the same family as posted on the STB website. It is incredible how self-centered some people can be concerning the proposed Vulcan project and the connected railroad route. Apparently, these people believe they are the only people to be inconvenienced or hurt by this project. Everything was just fine until they learned that a proposed railroad route could cross their property. What about the other people that have heritage land that might be cut in two by a route of a proposed railroad route or have a train run right next to their homes?

Do they assume they (meaning anyone in their family) will never be affected by the gravel truck traffic or the horrible accidents that might occur? It wasn't long ago that a family of four was all killed instantly in an accident with a gravel truck in this area. When will it happen again?

I assume they feel they are far enough away to not be bothered or harmed by the polluted air. They further state that they have an irrigated farm. What will they do when the water use of the rock crusher comes before their needs or perhaps even results in the water level being reduced by so much that they cannot irrigate? What if the water supply becomes contaminated and not fit for human consumption?

I guess they don't care about the history in Quihi----only that **their** land has been in their family for over 100 years. Incredibly self centered.

We did not inherit our land. We, too, are not monetarily rich. We worked long and hard and saved to purchase our property. Because this land was our "little piece of Texas" and a prized possession, my husband cleared the land by hand----no machinery----in an effort to restore it to its' native state with native Texas grasses, plants and Texas Longhorn cattle. So you see we feel we are severely affected by this project, too.

This proposed quarry and its' connected railroad---one would not be profitable with the other---should never be allowed in this area. We don't want the quarry, we don't want the truck traffic and hazards and we don't want a railroad.

Sincerely,

Jacque Conrad
Medina County Land Owner

#E1-2060
RS

Received 5/17/06

May 12, 2006
1316 Shady Lane
Hondo, TX 78861

Ms. Rini Ghosh,
Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
Finance Docket 34284
1925 K Street
Washington, DC 20423

RE: Support for Vulcan Material Company

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

I feel very strongly that it would be in the best interests of the people of this area for Vulcan Material Company to be able to construct a railroad to their projected quarry. I also feel that it would benefit the whole Medina County because of the increase of jobs and also, the increase in tax revenue.

I also feel that the people in support of Vulcan Material Company far outnumber the people against Vulcan Material Company's proposed quarry. It is my opinion that the people opposing Vulcan have been extremely active in publicizing their position and that the people in support of Vulcan have been rather reticent in making their position known.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely

Ethel Martin

Ethel Martin

#E1-2094
RA

April 27, 2006

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

received 5/25/06

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

Dear Ms. Ghosh,

My husband's family has farmed about 1,200 acres of land 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 – since his grandfather acquired this land in 1942.

Two of his brothers currently farm this land as a partnership. This partnership is the source of income for both of these brothers and their families and for his parents. Through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of his parents and all six of his brothers and he while they were growing up, and now through the hard work and frugal lifestyles of the two brothers still farming, they have been able to develop the farm over the years. Some of the developments include two deep irrigation water wells drilled into the Edwards Underground Aquifer, together with a network of 10 inch and 12 inch underground piping to distribute the water across the property and several booster pumps to increase the pressure and, finally, four very large (and very expensive) sprinkler irrigation systems, which travel across the land to distribute the water very efficiently across the acreage. Corn, cotton, and milo are currently grown on this acreage.

The MCEAA Medina Dam Alternative Route and the Eastern Bypass Route both pass through this farm in locations that would severely disrupt the irrigation systems in which they have invested more than $400,000. But even of greater concern to them is the resulting destruction of their irrigated farm land, upon which much of his family depends for livelihood. Their production, if they are deprived of their irrigation system, would not afford income adequate to meet the needs of their families. Dry land farming in this drought-consistent area is almost impossible. His brothers would be forced to find other means of support, and his parents who are completely dependent on the farm income would have no other means of support.

However, if your section can look with favor on the suggested revision of the route, as shown on the attached plat, their large sprinkler irrigation systems will remain unaffected and their farming operation saved. The suggested route comes off the Proposed Route of the Southwest Gulf Railroad Company, runs along their west property boundary, curves eastward across their northwest corner and connects with either the Eastern Bypass Route or the MCEAA Medina Dam Alternate Route. It will render useless about 50 acres of land in their northwest corner that is a wooded area not in cultivation. Similarly, Mr. Russell Mangold, their neighbor on the north

will be intersected across his southeast corner, affecting about 30 acres of his land. This route offers the railroad a route through the escarpment north of them that is probably the least severe in grade escalation. The route along their western border is level in grade, except for a slight incline in the northwest corner that is wooded. The land lost by them, and by Russell Mangold, is not as hurtful as would be the case if the route passes through the heart of their farm and their installed irrigation system is rendered unusable.

We simply ask you to please take into consideration the proposed somewhat modest change in the route, which, if approved, will save their farm and the means of survival for his brothers and his parents.

Sincerely yours,

Melinda Weiblen

Melinda Weiblen
2520 FM 471 North
Castroville, Texas 78009
830-931-3049

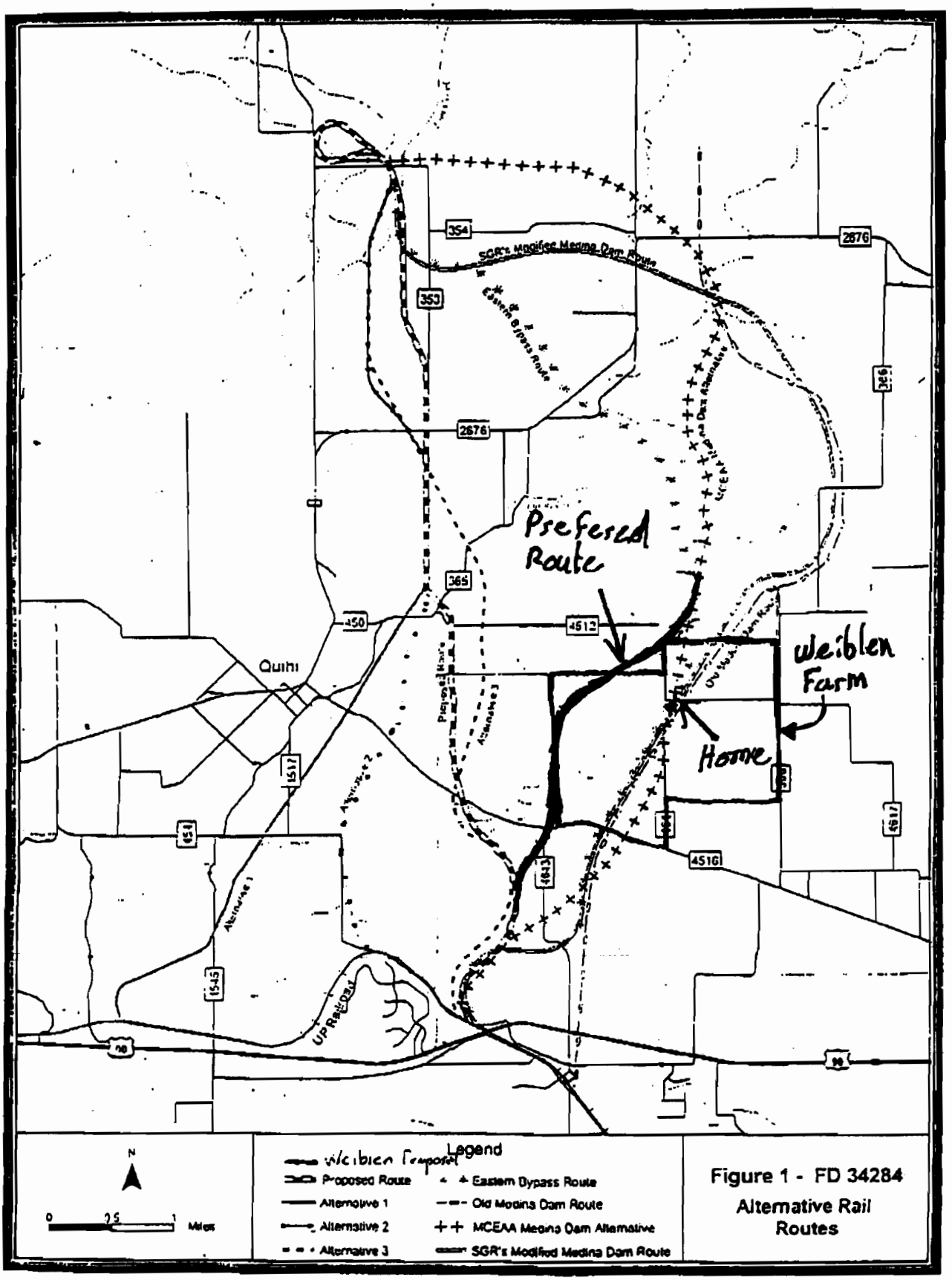

Figure 1 - FD 34284
Alternative Rail Routes

FD 34284
received 5/30/06

#E1-2097
RS

I am a business owner and a resident of Medina County. Without a doubt, I would be impacted by Vulcan Materials' planed rock quarry near Quihi. That's why I'm writing to support the company's effort to build a rail line from the quarry to the UP line.

It makes much more sense to use rail instead of trucks. It's safer, cleaner, and better for the environment. By far the people who live out here prefer a rail line. Only a handful oppose it.

Please listen to the majority of people who will be affected. Please allow Vulcan to build a rail line.

Sincerely,

Jimmy Dixon

E1-2111
RA

GALM REAL ESTATE

Residential • Commercial • Investment • Ranch

May 25, 2006

FD 34284

received 6/7/06

To Whom It May Concern::

I live and work in Medina County. It is a wonderful place to live, work and raise a family. Medina County is an outstanding community. I want to see Medina County survive and grow. In order to grow, we need jobs and a growing economy. We need places for parents to earn a living to support their families.

These are my reasons for supporting Vulcan Materials' effort to start a rock quarry and build a rail line here. I look forward to the day they open for business.

Please consider these items as you decide on the necessary permits for Vulcan Materials. The people of our county will appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Linda Gunn

Linda Gunn
Realtor®

Born and raised in Medina County

Web: www.GalmRealEstate.net

800 Hwy 90 West
P.O. Box 777
Castroville, TX 78009

Sam Ballow 830-931-0900
Fax 830-931-0901
Linda Gunn 830-931-0903

#E1-2311

RS

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

P.O. Box 2910
Austin, Texas 78768-2910
(512) 463-0670
Fax (512) 463-1469

Committees:
Transportation
Pensions & Investments
Redistricting

Mike Krusee

Chairman, House Committee on Transportation

Received 6/13/06

June 5, 2006

Victoria Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
1925 K Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20423-0001

FD 34284

Dear Ms. Rutson:

The intent of this letter is to convey to you the critical need for construction materials, particularly crushed stone, in the state of Texas today. Current demand for construction aggregates far outpaces supply, with forecasts showing increasing demand in the years to come. Our economy in Texas is growing rapidly and the need for additional sources of construction materials has never been greater. In addition, the promulgation of the Trans Texas Corridor, a comprehensive trunk system proposed by Governor Rick Perry and approved by our State Legislature, and the influx of additional federal highway dollars from the recently signed Transportation Act have greatly enhanced the demand for aggregate materials in road construction.

Presently, the state of Texas has several proposed quarry operations being considered by state and federal governmental authorities for permit applications. When these proposed facilities begin operation, they will bring valuable sources of construction materials to alleviate the material shortages existing today. Specifically, the quarry and rail projects currently proposed by Vulcan Materials Company in Medina County, Texas will be an important new source of construction aggregates, particularly in Houston and all along the rapidly growing Texas Gulf Coast.

As the chairman of the House Committee on Transportation in the Texas State Legislature, I am writing to urge you to expedite the review of this important project so that our state may benefit from this much needed resource. Thank you for your attention to this request. If you have any further questions on this or any other matter, do not hesitate to contact me.

Respectfully,

Mike Krusee

Mike krusee

District 92

#E1-2348
RY

Knippa Independent School District
P.O. Box 99
Knippa, Texas 78870
830-934-2176

Rebecca Suttles, Principal

Rini Ghosh
Federal Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received
6/16/06

June 9, 2006

FD 34284

Dear Mr. Ghosh:

As the principal of Knippa High School, in Knippa, Texas, I see the impact that a rock quarry has on a community every day. Right in the middle of Knippa, we have a Vulcan Materials' quarry. We are proud of this distinction, so proud that our school's nickname is the Rock Crushers.

I care deeply about children and have devoted my life to educating them. I was a teacher for several years and now absolutely enjoy being a principal. I could not advocate anything that would be harmful to children. When I began hearing opponents of Vulcan Materials' project in Medina County, I was disappointed that they did not take the time to experience what I have. Vulcan Materials is a very safe company and a very conscientious company. They are devoted to our community and support our residents in many ways. I wholeheartedly support their effort to start a rock quarry in Medina County and encourage approval for a rail line.

For 12 years, Vulcan has given more than I could imagine to our community and our schools. The employees are honest. They will treat Medina County residents well. Vulcan does what they say they will do.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Suttles

Rebecca Suttles
Principal, Knippa School

cc:
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality
Representative Tracy O. King
Commissioner Beverly Keller
Commissioner Arturo Barrientes
Commissioner Kelly Carroll
Judge Jim Barden
U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison
Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs
Texas Historical Commission

#EE2349
RG

May 7, 2006

received 6/16/06

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

FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

I am writing to you regarding the proposed route for the railroad line from Dunlay, Texas to Vulcan Materials pit in Medina County.

I have followed this proposed development with interest over the past months. There does not seem to be an easy solution to this situation. After much thought and discussion, I have concluded that the wise choice between rail or truck routes is the rail route…now, which one?

I have lived on County Road 4516 since 1972, and have seen the traffic pattern go from practically nothing to an extremely busy thoroughfare. In spite of the 45 mph speed limit, cars speed by, aided by a scarcity of police patrols/radar traps, and the straightness and smoothness of the road.

I live within two miles of the latest proposed route, "the old Medina Dam route." My first reaction was favorable, until I was informed that the crossing on County Road 4516 would be surface and not an overpass. This is potentially a very dangerous idea. County Road 4516 is straight and smooth from just outside of Castroville, to just before this proposed crossing of the railway. Immediately before the crossing site, traveling west, CR 4516 makes an abrupt left curve, simultaneously dropping 50-75 feet in elevation. Prior to the curve and drop in elevation, visibility of the roadway ahead is totally blocked. This is where I have been advised that the surface railroad crossing would be located. I shudder to think of the disasters and tragedies that could take place at such a crossing.

Please investigate my claims…send someone out to verify what I have described. If you insist that "the old Medina Dam route" is indeed the best location, so be it….but, please consider building an overpass for the crossing of County Road 4516.

Thank you very much.

Yours Truly,

Barbara L. Gilliam

Barbara L. Gilliam

#E1-2421
RG

Rini Ghosh
Case Control Unit
Federal Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423

FD 34284
received 7/17/06

July 11, 2006

Ms. Ghosh:

As a businesswoman in Medina County, I have listened to a presentation by Vulcan Materials about its proposed rock quarry and rail line. I have asked questions and followed the progress of their plans and have read about the effort in the newspaper. I now feel the need to write in support of the company.

We need jobs and economic growth here, and Vulcan Materials will bring that. From what I have seen, the company will not be detrimental to the environment or the community at large. Company representatives have been very forthright about their operations and very open to input from the citizens of Medina County.

Please move swiftly to approve Vulcan Materials' application.

Sincerely,

Rhiannon Smith

Rhiannon Smith

cc:
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality , Representative Tracy O. King, Commissioner Beverly Keller, Commissioner Arturo Barrientes, Commissioner Kelly Carroll, Judge Jim Barden, U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla, U.S. Senator John Cornyn, U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, Texas Historical Commission

#EI-2431

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received 7/24/06

FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My family has been a part of Medina County for 86 years. This is family land. Most of us are life-long residents. We have been here a long time and appreciate the people who are our neighbors and the farmers who make a living nearby.

I am aware of the proposed routes for the rail line from Vulcan's planned rock quarry to Dunlay. Compared to using trucks, I am in favor of rail being used to haul rock. The rail line should be direct and the most sensible. It should cross as few streams, roads, and farms as possible. The recent three alternatives that run east and near CR 366 are the worst choices. The direct routes are the reasonable choices.

I am absolutely in favor of Vulcan's original route or their alternatives that run near that route. Please do not approve the recent alternative routes that run farther east. Please approve the routes that are most direct for the sake of safety, the environment, and the farming community.

Please understand the impact that this eastward alternative would have on the farming community. Cutting through this farmland would negatively impact upon these families abilities to earn a living.

Sincerely,

Betty Lawrence

Betty Lawrence

#E1-2432
RS

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received
7/24/06
FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My family has been a part of Medina County for 86 years. This is family land. Most of us are life-long residents. We have been here a long time and appreciate the people who are our neighbors and the farmers who make a living nearby.

I am aware of the proposed routes for the rail line from Vulcan's planned rock quarry to Dunlay. Compared to using trucks, I am in favor of rail being used to haul rock. The rail line should be direct and the most sensible. It should cross as few streams, roads, and farms as possible. The recent three alternatives that run east and near CR 366 are the worst choices. The direct routes are the reasonable choices.

I am absolutely in favor of Vulcan's original route or their alternatives that run near that route. Please do not approve the recent alternative routes that run farther east. Please approve the routes that are most direct for the sake of safety, the environment, and the farming community.

Please understand the impact that this eastward alternative would have on the farming community. Cutting through this farmland would negatively impact upon these families abilities to earn a living.

Sincerely,

Ben Lawrence

#EI-2433
RJ

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received
7/24/06
FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My family has been a part of Medina County for 86 years. This is family land. Most of us are life-long residents. We have been here a long time and appreciate the people who are our neighbors and the farmers who make a living nearby.

I am aware of the proposed routes for the rail line from Vulcan's planned rock quarry to Dunlay. Compared to using trucks, I am in favor of rail being used to haul rock. The rail line should be direct and the most sensible. It should cross as few streams, roads, and farms as possible. The recent three alternatives that run east and near CR 366 are the worst choices. The direct routes are the reasonable choices.

I am absolutely in favor of Vulcan's original route or their alternatives that run near that route. Please do not approve the recent alternative routes that run farther east. Please approve the routes that are most direct for the sake of safety, the environment, and the farming community.

Please understand the impact that this eastward alternative would have on the farming community. Cutting through this farmland would negatively impact upon these families abilities to earn a living.

Sincerely,

Keith Lawrence

#EI-2434
RA

FD 34284

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

Received 7/24/06

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My family has been a part of Medina County for 86 years. This is family land. Most of us are life-long residents. We have been here a long time and appreciate the people who are our neighbors and the farmers who make a living nearby.

I am aware of the proposed routes for the rail line from Vulcan's planned rock quarry to Dunlay. Compared to using trucks, I am in favor of rail being used to haul rock. The rail line should be direct and the most sensible. It should cross as few streams, roads, and farms as possible. The recent three alternatives that run east and near CR 366 are the worst choices. The direct routes are the reasonable choices.

I am absolutely in favor of Vulcan's original route or their alternatives that run near that route. Please do not approve the recent alternative routes that run farther east. Please approve the routes that are most direct for the sake of safety, the environment, and the farming community.

Please understand the impact that this eastward alternative would have on the farming community. Cutting through this farmland would negatively impact upon these families abilities to earn a living.

S erely,

Dora Horner

Dora Horner

#E1-2435
RS

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received
7/24/06

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

FD 34284

My family has been a part of Medina County for 86 years. This is family land. Most of us are life-long residents. We have been here a long time and appreciate the people who are our neighbors and the farmers who make a living nearby.

I am aware of the proposed routes for the rail line from Vulcan's planned rock quarry to Dunlay. Compared to using trucks, I am in favor of rail being used to haul rock. The rail line should be direct and the most sensible. It should cross as few streams, roads, and farms as possible. The recent three alternatives that run east and near CR 366 are the worst choices. The direct routes are the reasonable choices.

I am absolutely in favor of Vulcan's original route or their alternatives that run near that route. Please do not approve the recent alternative routes that run farther east. Please approve the routes that are most direct for the sake of safety, the environment, and the farming community.

Please understand the impact that this eastward alternative would have on the farming community. Cutting through this farmland would negatively impact upon these families abilities to earn a living.

Sincerely,

Dorothy Masters

Dorothy Masters

#E1-2482
RD

August 1, 2006

FD 34284

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received
8/8/06

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

For some time I have been following the situation with Vulcan Materials and their work to start a rock quarry and their move to start a rail line. The company has been very up-front about their intentions and very out in the open about their plans. They will be bringing jobs to our county and giving the economy a shot in the arm. I look forward to them starting up.

The opponents of this are not looking at the whole picture and what it will mean to our county. Like many Medina County residents, I work in San Antonio. We really don't have a choice about where to work because of the few jobs and the type of jobs here. It's time we changed that. It would be a positive change for Vulcan to start up out here. The sooner the better. The other part of the picture is the rail line. The more direct rail routes are the most sensible ones.

Please give the necessary permits to Vulcan Materials for their quarry and rail line. The people of Medina County would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Kathy Holzhaus

Kathy Holzhaus

#EI-2483
RG

August 1, 2006

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received 8/8/06
FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

For some time I have been following the situation with Vulcan Materials and their work to start a rock quarry and their move to start a rail line. The company has been very up-front about their intentions and very out in the open about their plans. They will be bringing jobs to our county and giving the economy a shot in the arm. I look forward to them starting up.

The opponents of this are not looking at the whole picture and what it will mean to our county. A lot of people from Medina County work in San Antonio. They really don't have a choice about where to work because of the few jobs and the type of jobs here. It's time we changed that. It would be a positive change for Vulcan to start up out here. The sooner the better. The other part of the picture is the rail line. The more direct rail routes are the most sensible ones.

Please give the necessary permits to Vulcan Materials for their quarry and rail line. The people of Medina County would appreciate it.

Sincerely,

George Holzhaus

George Holzhaus

#E1-2484
RS

Rini Ghosh
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Washington, D.C. 20423

received
7/31/06

FD 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

My family has been a part of Medina County for 86 years. This is family land. Most of us are life-long residents. We have been here a long time and appreciate the people who are our neighbors and the farmers who make a living nearby.

I am aware of the proposed routes for the rail line from Vulcan's planned rock quarry to Dunlay. Compared to using trucks, I am in favor of rail being used to haul rock. The rail line should be direct and the most sensible. It should cross as few streams, roads, and farms as possible. The recent three alternatives that run east and near CR 366 are the worst choices. The direct routes are the reasonable choices.

I am absolutely in favor of Vulcan's original route or their alternatives that run near that route. Please do not approve the recent alternative routes that run farther east. Please approve the routes that are most direct for the sake of safety, the environment, and the farming community.

Please understand the impact that this eastward alternative would have on the farming community. Cutting through this farmland would negatively impact upon these families abilities to earn a living.

Sincerely,

JoNell Tarvin

JoNell Tarvin

#E1-2512
RS

To: Members of the Surface Transportation Board
of the U.S. Department of Transportation
Section of Environmental Analysis

received
9/1/06

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

We contacted you approximately a year and a half ago by letter and have continued to follow the process of this application with great interest. We are contacting you again because we fear that you may be getting an incorrect impression that Medina County residents oppose this application for the Southwest Gulf Railroad (SGR). When you held the hearing in December 2004, we attended and listened to many of the opponents. Unfortunately many supporters did not feel the need to show up that day. The people of Quihi and the county as a whole overwhelmingly support this project. The opponents of this permit make up a minority, albeit a very vocal one.

Since that hearing, the supporters of the rail line have come out three times to outnumber the opposition. Two of those events were at the county courthouse. The other was a hearing in front of the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality with more than 200 people pushing for this project. We are tired of the delays and see the need to give our view. For too long we listened to self-appointed leaders claim to speak for the rest of us.

Also, many people who once opposed the rail line have learned more about it. For a long time they were led to believe that the quarry could only be started if the rail line were allowed. They now understand that the two are separate issues, and they see the benefit of the rail line. To disallow the rail line will have a detrimental impact on the area. The rail line will provide a greater level of safety, will protect the environment and will offer economic opportunities for other property. Also, Vulcan has already proven its interest in historic preservation and community involvement. We trust the people who work with that company and agree with them that a rail line is the better option for hauling material from the quarry.

We have been very impressed with the STB staff and the comprehensive work you have done. You have done a very good job of checking all the claims made by the opponents of this project. Most of those claims (such as railroad

vibrations will cause the Medina dam to crack) have turned out to be false. We understand that your job requires you to look into those claims. Now that you have considered all those, we hope that you will grant this permit soon and allow the majority of Medina residents to feel that they have been heard.

From: Glenn Schweers Mary Jo Schweers

Glenn R. Schweers Mary Jo Schweers
2602 Avenue K
Hondo, Texas 78861

#EI-2513
RG

Rini Ghosh
Case Control Unit
Federal Surface Transportation Board
Washington, D.C. 20423

July 11, 2006

received 9/1/06

Ms. Ghosh:

As a businessman in Medina County, I have listened to a presentation by Vulcan Materials about its proposed rock quarry and rail line. I have asked questions and followed the progress of their plans and have read about the effort in the newspaper. I now feel the need to write in support of the company.

We need jobs and economic growth here, and Vulcan Materials will bring that. From what I have seen, the company will not be detrimental to the environment or the community at large. Company representatives have been very forthright about their operations and very open to input from the citizens of Medina County.

Please move swiftly to approve Vulcan Materials' application.

Sincerely,

Wade Smith

cc:
Texas Commission on Environmental Quality , Representative Tracy O. King, Commissioner Beverly Keller, Commissioner Arturo Barrientes, Commissioner Kelly Carroll, Judge Jim Barden, U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla, U.S. Senator John Cornyn, U.S. Senator Kay Bailey Hutchison, Texas Agriculture Commissioner Susan Combs, Texas Historical Commission