

Thursday, February 19, 2004

FD 34284

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RJA

To Whom It May Concern:

Thank you for your correspondence regarding TX Dot's investigation of the proposed railway system requested by Vulcan Materials Southwest Division Corporation. Who would have imagined when we purchased our dream home just a few short years ago, that my family's homestead would be endangered; moreover, my family's safety would be at risk. The decision to move into a serene, safe, and breathe-taking environment was our sole purpose for relocation. After a year of searching for land all around the state, careful thought and planning went into this major undertaking. With Vulcan knocking on our door, my family's safety now becomes our number one priority.

President Tom Ransdell's comments in the February 19, 2004, issue of the Hondo Anvil Herald blasted a strong message as a Vulcan representative. The message that "Vulcan didn't want it to sound like they weren't concerned about safety; however, profitability is tantamount and construction of an overpass for the railway should occur if required by TX Dot once the project turns a profit. Once the profits occur, Vulcan would pay TX Dot to build an overpass only if needed". This reinforces Vulcan's values of profitability at the expense of environment and safety issues. Does the loss of one life or the destruction of one family member have to be the price before Vulcan understands the priorities of safety for family members? Currently, my children ride a Hondo I.S.D. school bus to and from our home in Medina Oak Estates. In a few short years, my eldest son will be making the trip several times a day once his driver's license is obtained; including summer trips due to athletics and a summertime job. The decision to wait is not acceptable. The concern for safety doesn't stop with young students driving to/from Hondo High School. Both my husband and I have elderly parents who visit on a weekly basis. In the event of a medical emergency, how long will the "911" response teams take if blocked by a "slow moving train"? What would happen to our homestead in the event of a fire? The Mico fire department often calls for assistance from surrounding cities and Hondo's fire department would be dispatched in the event of a major fire. Would the train stop for the emergency vehicles right of way as the fire spares no mercy? If Vulcan is allowed to advance with their requested railway, the overpass must not wait. In our subdivision alone, we know of four elderly couples who reside without any help from the outside. Who will claim the responsibility for the delayed "911" response team as it waits for the train to pass. Texas State Law was recently passed to insure the safety of our "911" vehicles rendering assistance on state highways. Should this safety be any lessened because we live on a county road. After all, isn't this why many families move from large cities into the safe, beautiful, serene countryside? A place which my husband and I thought would give my family and me a sense of safety and security within "God's Country".

I ask you to please not take my cries lightly. Think of your family and their safety when making your final decision to advance this project. In all my years on earth, I believed that lives are priceless. Let's not change this message by putting profitability first.

Thank you in advance for considering this community's safety first. I remain

Marilyn S. Brown

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