



COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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R2

February 24, 2004

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Received
2/26/04

Attention: Rini Ghosh

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

I am writing in regard to the "Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement" in the above-referenced Finance Docket. I wish to submit the following comments to be considered during the formal scoping process.

It appears to me that Vulcan's proposed quarry and rail line (under SGR) are clearly integrated undertakings, and the overall proposed project should be studied in the EIS. Such an EIS would include consideration of direct impacts and possible alternatives to both projects.

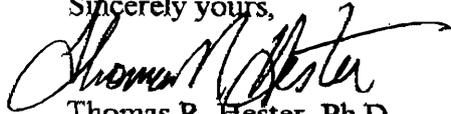
Though I am not a resident of Quihi, I am a resident of Medina County and serve on the Medina County Historical Commission. Moreover, I am a professional archaeologist who has worked in Texas for 40 years. I am presently conducting research at Quihi, at sites 41ME132 and 41ME133. I am thus very much aware of the proposed project and the potential impacts to the irreplaceable historic and prehistoric cultural resources. I am also concerned because the Quihi area of Medina County has had no sustained archaeological or historical studies (my present project is, indeed, the first to explore the archaeology in any detail). Any impacts to these resources will destroy or heavily modify any future interpretations of the regional cultures in ancient times and in the mid-19th century European settlement. Quarries can be exploited and abandoned; railroads can be built, used, and later torn out. But once the remains associated with cultural resources are damaged, the information is gone forever.

Therefore, in the formal scoping of the EIS, cultural resources must be fully considered. Archaeologists and historians of the highest integrity and proper background (e.g., fully familiar with the archaeology of Texas, its early history, and the legal aspects of the project) must be able to conduct unfettered and comprehensive surface surveys and, where

warranted, test excavations or other special investigations. It is critical that the archaeologists work in conjunction with an experienced *geomorphologist*, in that the geology I've observed in the Quihi Creek drainage is very unusual and will clearly have great relevance to the recognition of cultural deposits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide these observations.

Sincerely yours,



Thomas R. Hester, Ph.D.
Professor of Anthropology, emeritus

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