

#E-643
RS

February 21, 2004

Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-001

Attention: Rini Ghosh

Re: Finance Docket No. 34284

Dear Ms. Ghosh:

In response to the Notice of Intent to Prepare an Environmental Impact Statement, I am submitting the following to be considered in the formal scoping process.

I believe Vulcan's proposed quarry and proposed SGR rail line, regardless of where the railroad is constructed, are connected actions, and should be studied in the same Environmental Impact Statement. The study should include direct impacts and alternatives to both projects, including no quarry and no rail line at all.

I am John A. Waits, 70 years old, a retired school teacher and a permanent resident of Medina County for 24 years. I raise beef cattle and poultry. We live within a mile of the proposed quarry.

I have great concerns connected to the STB Finance Docket No. 34284, Southwest Gulf Railroad Company Construction and Operation Exemption - Medina County, TX.

These concerns are what effect the blasting will have on the Edwards Aquifer from which we draw our drinking water and water for our farm animals. Since there is no regulation on the amount of blasting material that will be put in the hole, will this effect our well, the quality of our water and our home?

Also, I am concerned about the safety connected with both the railroad crossings and truck traffic. The two lane hardtop road, as well as the gravel roads that will be used, will not accommodate the number or the large size trucks. The truck traffic, as well as the rail cars will pollute the air with dust from the gravel, as well as, the exhaust.

I have another concern, and that is for the wildlife in the area. In this area, not long ago, there were found to be two endangered species of birds. This situation prevented farmers and ranchers from clearing cedar trees to enlarge their fields and pastures.

I would surely appreciate your diligent attention to details on this matter. Thank you very much.

Sincerely

received
2/25/04