

#E1-704
RHS

February 23, 2004

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



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 a resident of the area in proximity to the proposed railroad and the quarry. I am a rancher and own a ranch/farm within two miles of the rail and quarry just north of F.M. 2676 on CR 265. I am retired and returned to my family homestead to raise cattle and enjoy the serenity and clean air of the countryside.

My primary concerns of the quarry are the impact of the pollution of dust in the air and on myself, livestock, wildlife and vegetation and the effect of related blasting on the Edwards Aquifer. The pollution caused by the quarry is very evident around the Vulcan quarry on FM 1283. The quarry is located in the Edwards Aquifer recharge zone and the proposed fuel storage and maintenance area are also in the recharge zone. The Edwards Aquifer Protection Plan dated March 3, 2003 presented by the Greater Edwards Aquifer Alliance defines the use restrictions for the recharge zone: "To protect both water quality and water quantity, use restrictions in the Edwards recharge and contributing zones need to be imposed. The following activities should be wholly prohibited: MINING, GAS STATIONS."

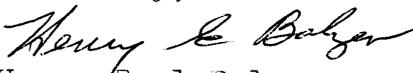
My primary concerns of the grade level railroad is the danger to

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motorists on FM2676, the possibility of delay to emergency equipment from Hondo to residents east of the railroad, and potential blockage of flood waters of the Quihi Creek, which would raise the level to the flood plain on tributaries of the Quihi creek and endanger my residence which is currently not in the flood plain. The trains on the railroad would definitely cause delay to any EMS or fire trucks to residents east of the rail in case of emergency.

Vulcan claims to be a good neighbor, but the proposed rail and quarry are certainly not in the best interest of the residents in the proximity of the project. I urge your consideration of the effect on the environment and safety of the residents regarding air pollution, water quality and qauntity for this and future generations.

Sincerely,


Henry Earl Balzen

cc: U.S. Congressman Henry Bonilla
U.S. Senator John Cornyn
Texas Senator Frank Madla
Texas Representative Timoteo Garza
Medina County Judge Jim Barden
Medina County Commisioner Royce Hartman