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RJI

Received
2/23/04

February 22, 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:

As a parent and a resident of Medina County, I am writing to express my concerns regarding the proposed Vulcan Quarry in Quihi. I would like to submit the following items to be considered in the formal review process for this project.

My first concern involves the safety of our residential water supply. Many residents of rural Medina County, and this includes the communities of Quihi, Dunley, and Mico, receive their home water supply from private wells. As had occurred in other locations, quarry blasting has damaged wells and septic tanks. Septic tanks have reportedly polluted wells when blasting damaged their structure. The EIS should study the present condition of wells in the areas surround the proposed Vulcan site. In these rural communities, a public water supply is unavailable. The EIS should study the effect of the loss of these residential wells and how families effected by this potential loss would get water for their personal needs.

To continue, the EIS should include in their review process a study of the proposed fuel storage area that is to be located just south of CR 353. This proposed storage area is over the Edwards Aquifer Recharge Zone and diesel fuel storage over the Recharge Zone is prohibited, per Edwards Aquifer Authority ruling. With that many communities are served by the Edwards Underground Aquifer, including the city of San Antonio, the number of people who would be affected by a potential fuel spill or leak is considerable.

In addition, the EIS should include a study of how the quality of water from the Edwards Underground Aquifer would be affected when Vulcan mines to a depth of 200-250 feet. This is significant since the private wells in the surrounding areas would likely be affected at this depth.

Likewise, the EIS should include in their findings a study of the effect that blasting in the proposed Vulcan quarry would have upon the structural integrity of the Medina Dam, which is located northeast of the proposed site. In recent years, there has been concern regarding the integrity of this dam and, as an individual who travels that area daily, my concern is for the safety of our roadways. In the event of a structure failure, residents and their property will be at risk, and those spared loss of property and possibly life will certainly experience considerable inconvenience as repairs are performed on both the dam and the roadways below it. Traveling to San Antonio would take an estimated 45-

60 minutes longer as a result of considerable detours required when the roads below the dam would be unavailable.

Further, the EIS should include a study of the effects of the heavily loaded trucks weighing 78,000 pounds traveling on FM 2676. These roads were not designed to withstand weight of that magnitude. With regard to Vulcan's proposed quarry, who will be responsible for upgrading both state and county roads that these heavily loaded trucks would travel? This is a cost that could be quite extensive for local taxpayers.

As a parent of school age children, I am also concerned about the effect of both the railroad and the heavily loaded trucks on travel to and from school. The EIS should include a complete study on times and duration of rail traffic across any and all roads without grade separation, the effect of delays, derailment frequency, probability of accidents due to the increased traffic load of these large trucks and the railroad, stopping distances, noise levels and vibration, spills of chemicals and diesel fuels, or other hazardous materials being transported.

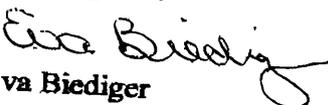
The EIS should include a study of the effects of the truck traffic on our unimproved county roads, the increase in maintenance, the cost of such maintenance, dangers to other vehicles, the impact of roads closed periodically for repair for all routes proposed and their alternatives. Residents with school children have a personal concern for this aspect of Vulcan's proposed quarry project. Our children travel the roads via school bus that will be affected twice daily. We cannot and should not be expected to accept any project that puts our children in harm's way.

Many families in the areas surrounding the proposed Vulcan quarry site are longtime residents who have historical ties to the community or newcomers who moved to the area for the peace natural beauty it affords. This benefit will be lost if the vibration and noise of the quarry and its traffic becomes oppressive. Also, there is concern for the structures of historical importance in Quihi. These historical sites were not built in a time when this sort of blasting and mining was taking place in the area. The EIS should include a full study of each route, proposed, their alternatives, and no routes at all, with regard to the aesthetics of the historical district and the archeological artifacts of Quihi.

Finally, the EIS should include both the proposed Vulcan quarry and the proposed railroad because they are interdependent and both integral parts of the whole project. These are, quite simply independent and connected actions that should be considered together.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best Regards,


Eva Biediger