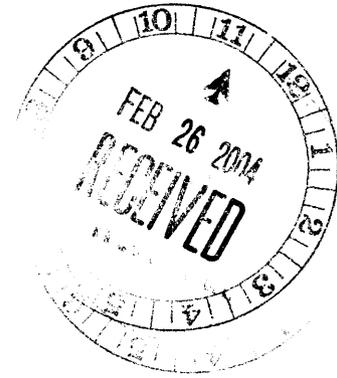


#E1-678
R21

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:

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.

This is my second letter to the Surface Transportation Board. The first letter was concerning the fact that our property is near the RR tracks and since I suffer from vertigo, I am concerned about the train vibrations. Does research show whether full trains or empty cars cause the most vibrations. How far out do these vibrations extend? Do the vibrations increase with added cars?

Our property is in the flood plain on Elm Creek at FM 2676. We have lived here since 1995 but have experienced several flash floods. The flood pattern for Elm Creek cuts our property in half and even spread out to block access to our gate. We are marooned since we cannot go west because of Elm Creek or east because of the Quihi Creek. The water running across FM 2676 at the Elm Creek bridge has gone over the six foot marker placed there. Our house, shops and barns have not been flooded as of yet, but the slightest change in the water flow could cause flood damage to these buildings and all equipment stored in them. Any hay stored there would not be suitable for cattle feed thereafter.

The concern I have is that the RR berms will hold or divert the water and change the flood plain patterns and our home and buildings will then flood. The people in this area have lived with flooding for years and have built in the safer areas. The flood of 1997 was disastrous for this area, flooding in areas that had not flooded before. My understanding is that a RR berm near Highway 90 broke and relieved the water backup and prevented even more flooding. The 1997 flood washed out the creek monitoring system that the Edwards Aquifer Authority had on Elm creek at our fence line. This EIS study should include any data the Edwards Aquifer Authority, the Corps of Engineers, FEMA and any and all pertinent flood data collected for the Quihi area flood plain for all flood years. What effect will the proposed RR lines have on future flooding?

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Because of the flooding in this area, what data have you collected on road conditions. How long after a flood does the county take to bring all county roads back to pre- flood conditions? At what cost? What costs do TxDoT incur with every flood? The road bed on FM 2676 at Elm Creek washed out in 1997.

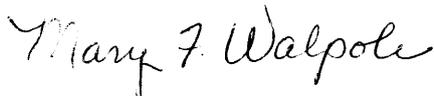
I think your study will reveal that flooding is a major problem in the Quihi area and a RR track through the flood plain will only exacerbate the problems.

Another concern my husband and I have is the proposed grade level crossing at FM 2676 and CR353. The potential for an accident at this crossing is highly probable. The speed limit on FM 2676 is 70 MPH. This is a farm to market road which means that local traffic, farmers on tractors and trucks hauling cattle use it daily. Weekend and holiday traffic includes motorcycle groups, biking clubs and Medina Lake boaters. A one day traffic count does not indicate the amount of traffic that uses FM 2676. Into this mix, add the gravel trucks that will haul aggregate from the quarry.

To adequately warn the traffic of an approaching train, the visual and audible warning system will be at or near our gate entrance. This noise will be a major annoyance several times a day and possibly into the night. Since this will be an unbearable intrusion on our home life, please include in your study, the exact amount of time daily that we are expected to endure this noise pollution including the noise of trains passing by.

A solution to this noise would be to construct the grade separation crossing at the intersection of FM 2676 and CR 353.

Sincerely,



Mary F. Walpole
5201 FM 2676
Hondo, TX. 78861

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