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LANDOWNERS REQUEST PERJURY INVESTIGATION OF TEXAS CENTRAL RAILWAY TESTIMONY IN 86TH LEGISLATURE

Jewett, Texas – Five Texas landowners have requested Texas House of Representatives Investigative Committee Chair Morgan Meyer open an investigation related to possible perjury committed by Texas Central Railway Managing Director Holly Reed for testimony provided during the 86th Legislative Session earlier this year.

Texas Central representatives testified at all committee hearings for bills related to high-speed rail, but the landowners' complaint is limited to two specific hearings on bills related to landowner protections against misuse of eminent domain authority by high-speed rail companies. Texas Central has long contended it is a railroad with the authority of eminent domain and represented this to private property owners in option contract negotiations. Even after a court ruled the company is not a railroad and does not have eminent domain authority, company representatives continue to make this claim to the public.

HB 4219 would have allowed landowners to cancel option contracts with the company and get their property back if it was later determined in court that Texas Central did not have eminent domain authority (the court ruling above was issued during the course of the legislative session). HB 1367 would have given landowners who signed option contracts under the threat of eminent domain the right to get their property back from Texas Central if it was used for something other than the high-speed rail project or if the project was cancelled.

According to the landowners, Reed's testimony regarding the company's "option purchase program" was material to resolving the concerns of legislators about the need for such protections. In the letter it was explained that Reed's testimony made HB 4219 seem "unnecessary because Texas Central wasn't going to exercise any options until it had raised \$20 billion and received all permits..." Reed shared similar information about the option purchase program in the HB 1367 hearing, making it appear as if the company had built in the protection by not closing on option contracts until the project was at a point where it would be unlikely to be cancelled.

Texas Central Railway has not received any permits to construct or operate a high-speed rail, nor have they raised the needed construction funds; yet, the company began closing on option contracts in December of 2019, which Ms. Reed expressly told legislators they would not do. The landowners' letter with relevant testimony transcript and supporting documentation can be viewed [here](#).

Kyle Workman, chairman and president of Texans Against High-Speed Rail, said of the request for investigation, "Landowners have been lied to, had their property trespassed on and been sued in the courts by Texas Central, so, while it isn't surprising that they would misrepresent their project to our State Legislators, it is a serious affront to our State's legislative process. Because they were misled by Ms. Reed's testimony, legislators were not able to provide the landowner protections desperately needed to thwart this company's tactics. Chair Meyer now has the opportunity to investigate these claims and ensure that Texans know the legislature will not tolerate such actions."

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