

STATEMENT FROM TEXAS CENTRAL 2/11/19: Fact checks and updates

Opponents of Texas' high-speed train recycled numerous inaccurate and exaggerated claims Monday after a Leon County court decision. Here's how they stack up against the facts.

FALSE claim: *It's not a railroad.*

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has since 2014 led nearly two dozen federal regulatory agencies in overseeing the Texas train project. The FRA now is completing a final environmental and safety review, the last major step before construction begin on the passenger line between Houston and North Texas.

FALSE claim: *Texas Central doesn't have any rights as a railroad company.*

Texas Central is appealing the Leon County judge's decision and, meanwhile, it is moving forward on all aspects of the train project, continuing conversations with property owners in Leon County and elsewhere who are signing onto the company's land purchase program. Texas Central also is working without interruption on its construction planning and with its financial, engineering and business partners and with the FRA and its environmental study.

Also, a judge in Harris County previously declared that Texas Central is a bona fide railroad company, affirming its rights under state law to conduct surveys on private property to help determine the train's most advantageous route between North Texas and Houston.

That order held that Texas Central is a "railroad company" as defined in Section 81.002 of the Texas Transportation Code and an "interurban electric railway" as set forth in Section 131.011. In this instance, Texas Central completed the survey work and subsequently withdrew the legal action.

FALSE claim: *The company has lost all of its court survey cases.*

Aside from Leon County, a Harris County judge previously issued a default judgment that declared Texas Central a bona fide railroad company. And last month, a judge in Ellis County said trials should be held on survey cases for three local property owners. The judge did not rule on the merits of those cases, instead only saying they should proceed to trial.

FALSE claim: *Texas Central doesn't have eminent domain authority.*

The Texas Constitution and legislative statutes have long granted eminent domain authority to railroads like Texas Central, pipelines, electrical lines and other industries that provide for a public good and a strong economy.

FALSE claim: *Texas Central lacks the funding for this project and is not economically viable.*

Texas Central has self-funded its operations and is following Texas state law that prohibits using state money on the high-speed train project. The company announced in September that it has secured enough funds to move ahead on permitting, design and engineering, as well as other early works needed to launch construction. The global infrastructure community understands the business plan and is excited about this project.

FALSE claim: *Texas Central doesn't have the permits for construction or operation and is attempting to circumvent Texas regulators.*

Texas Central is being overseen by the federal government, and the company is working to obtain the relevant permits. The federal government doesn't issue construction permits. It provides environmental and safety permits.

FALSE claim: *Ridership estimates are grossly exaggerated.*

Texas Central has conducted several intensive investment-grade ridership studies to understand the size of the market. Already, 16 million people travel between North Texas and Houston every year. And that number will only increase given the growth rate of these cities and the fact that the high-speed train is designed to improve connections between the two largest and economically growing areas in Texas.

FALSE claim: *Texas Central is a Japanese company.*

Texas Central is a Texas-based company that is financially backed by Texans. As the company has progressed, it has drawn global interest. The technology being purchased from Japan is the safest mass transportation system in the world with over 54 years moving billions of people with no crashes and no deaths as a result of operations. Last year, Texas Central secured a loan from the Japan Overseas Infrastructure Investment Corp. for Transport & Urban Development and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation that will be paid back.

FALSE claim: *The company must have access to all property to establish the route.*

Under the FRA process, surveyors can use numerous methods to assess environmental conditions without having to access every individual lot.