

Decision No. 14184

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
William Sandholdt for permission to)
discontinue operation of Wharf at)
Moss Landing, California.)

APPLICATION NO. 10002

- William Sandholdt, in propria persona.
E. J. Pringle, for California Sea Products Co., Protestant.
E. C. Wyckhoff and Dave Goodfriend, for joint Committee of
Chamber of Commerce of Watsonville and Salinas, Protestants.
E. V. McNamara, for Pajaro Valley Consolidated Railroad Co.
D. C. Vierra, for Monterey Bay Salt Company.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

William Sandholdt has petitioned the Railroad Commission for an order authorizing him to abandon and discontinue as a public utility a wharf located at Moss Landing, California, alleging that the physical condition of the wharf is such that substantial repairs are necessary in order to continue service; that the business now offering is insufficient to even pay operating expenses, without setting aside an amount for depreciation.

A public hearing on this application was conducted by Examiner Geary at Watsonville Monday, June 16, 1924, at which

time the matter was submitted with the stipulation that the representatives from the cities of Salinas and Watsonville would be given sixty days in which to study the situation and endeavor, if possible, to cooperate with applicant in the securing of additional business which would justify the continuation of the public utility service.

From the records herein, it appears that the wharf it is proposed to abandon was erected in the year 1860 by the Pacific Steamship Company, who at that time conducted warehouses at Moss Landing and owned a considerable acreage. The property was purchased by this applicant from the steamship company in October 1922 in connection with certain warehouses and lands. At the time the purchase was made the wharf was very much run down and since has continually weakened by reason of the natural influences of the elements and the inability of the owner to make proper repairs.

For a number of months past freight vessels have not called at Moss Landing because of the wharf conditions, unloading their tonnage for that territory at Santa Cruz, from which point it was distributed by auto trucks, and the wharf is now only employed by small fishing craft. For all practical purposes the wharf has not served as a public utility for some time prior to the filing of this application for abandonment.

The annual report shows that during the year 1923 the property was operated at a gross corporate loss of \$1110.67; for the first five months of 1924 the revenue totalled \$2814.88 and the expenses \$3124.05, or a loss for that five months' period of \$309.17. This without any allowance for taxes or incidental expenses.

A number of witnesses representing interests located in the vicinity of Moss Landing and at Salinas and Watsonville gave

testimony mainly to the effect that the wharf, when in proper physical condition, served a useful purpose, but was in very limited demand, the traffic formerly passing through Moss Landing now being handled by other means, principally automobile trucks, due to improved highways.

As heretofore stated, the communities of Salinas and Watsonville, through their Chambers of Commerce, requested that the decision of the Commission be held in abeyance for at least sixty days, in order that they might canvass the territory and, if possible, secure guarantees for tonnage sufficient to justify the continuance of the wharf. We are now advised that this committee was unable to develop any tangible results and, therefore, had ceased its efforts and withdrawn its opposition to the granting of the application.

We have given careful consideration to all the evidence in this proceeding and it clearly appears that the service and facilities offered by this applicant are no longer a public necessity and, also, that under the conditions existing, the revenue is insufficient to meet the operating expenses, taxes and depreciation.

The application herein should be granted and will be so ordered.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held in the above entitled proceeding, the matter having been duly submitted and the Commission now being fully advised,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this application be and the same is hereby granted.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 20th day of October, 1924.

C. L. Seavey
H. B. Brundage
Iving Martin
Egerton Shore
Commissioners.