

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of  
SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY for authority  
to close the agency at Somis Station,  
County of Ventura, State of California,  
during the periods May 1st to  
September 30th, and November 1st to  
March 31st, inclusive, of each year.

ORIGINAL

) Application No. 13054  
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H. W. Hobbs and V. S. Andrus, for Applicant,  
J. J. Deuel for Ventura County Farm Bureau, Protestant,  
Richard Bard for interested residents of Somis, Protestants,  
R. L. Churchill for California Lima Bean Growers' Association,  
Protestant.

BY THE COMMISSION -

O P I N I O N

Southern Pacific Company, a corporation, has petitioned the Railroad Commission for an order authorizing the closing of its agency station at Somis on its Los Angeles Division in Ventura County during the periods May 1st to September 30th, and November 1st to March 31st, both inclusive, of each year.

A public hearing on this application was conducted by Examiner Handford at Oxnard, at which time evidence was received, the matter was duly submitted, and it is now ready for decision.

Applicant relies as justification for the granting of the application, on the following alleged facts:

That the operation of Somis station as an agency is not justified except during the periods April 1st to April 30th, and October 1st to October 31st, both inclusive, of each year; and that the maintenance of an agent during such above mentioned periods and of a non-agency station during the balance of each year will provide adequate service for the public under present conditions.

The following data has been abstracted from an exhibit filed by applicant as a portion of the application herein:

Year ending April 30, 1926

Period: - May 1st to September 30th, and November 1st to March 31st, both inclusive.

Revenue

Passenger Tickets Sold

(10 months on average monthly revenue of \$62.00) - \$ 620.00

Less than carload freight

Received - \$ 638.00

Forwarded - 89.00 727.00

Total Passenger Tickets Sold and less-  
than-carload Freight \$1347.00

Carload Freight

Received 8094.00

Forwarded 13717.00 21811.00  
\$ 23158.00

Agency Expense

Salary 1440.00

Expense 72.00  
\$ 1512.00

Percentage of less-than-carload freight revenue and passenger tickets sold required to care for Agency Expense, 112.24%.

Percentage of total revenue required to care for Agency Expense, 6.09%.

If the entire calendar year ending April 30, 1926, be considered, the following percentages are shown:

Percentage of less-than-carload freight revenue and passenger tickets sold required to care for agency expense: - 108.97%.

Percentage of total revenue required to care for Agency Expense: - 5.72%.

The carload business transacted at this station during the year ending April 30, 1926, was as follows:

<u>Forwarded</u>	<u>Received</u>
72 cars Beans	50 cars Cement
9 " Lettuce	15 " Rock
4 " Cabbage	11 " Sand
11 " Miscellaneous	12 " Hay
	<u>17 " Miscellaneous</u>
<u>96 cars</u>	105 cars

Mr. V. S. Andrus, Assistant to General Manager of applicant, received testified as to his study of the revenue/at Somis station for the years ending December 31, 1925, and August 31, 1926. This study, as reflected by an exhibit filed at the hearing, shows the following percentage increases or decreases in revenue received during the respective periods.

	<u>Increase Per Cent</u>	<u>Decrease Per Cent</u>
Less-than-carload Freight	-	8
Carload Freight	-	40
Passenger	-	16

The express revenue, on all shipments forwarded and received, during the year ending September 30, 1926, amounted to \$675.35, or a monthly average of \$56.28.

Mr. E. J. Kellam, Trainmaster on applicant's Los Angeles Division, described the service rendered to the public at agency and non-agency stations. Somis is served by one local freight in each direction, daily except Sunday, operating eastbound between 4:00 and 7:00 A.M., and westbound between 10:00 and 11:00 P.M. Two passenger trains westbound, and one eastbound, serve Somis as a flag stop. The nearest agency stations are Moorpark, 7.3 miles easterly, and Camarillo, 3.2 miles westerly.

The granting of the application is protested by the Ventura County Farm Bureau, the California Lima Bean Growers Association, and by interested residents of Somis.

Mr. R. L. Churchill, Manager of the California Lima Bean Growers Association, testified that his association had delivered to the Somis Warehouse 106,000 bags of beans during the present season, which he estimated to equal 326 carloads of 30 tons each, all of which would move from Somis over applicant's railroad. The estimate of witness as to the number of carloads appears in error, beans weighing approximately 100 pounds per sack, and the 106,000 sacks weighing 5300 tons which is equivalent to approximately 176 carloads of 30 tons each. While this estimate exceeds by more than 100 carloads the shipments of beans during the year ending April 30, 1926, witness states that the past year was one more nearly normal as to the bean crop, previous years having been below the average due to a deficient rainfall.

Mr. W. E. Basham, in charge of the Southern Pacific Milling Company's warehouse at Somis, testified that there were now 160,000 bags of beans in storage at his warehouse, beans being stored for independent producers as well as for the Bean Association; that conditions as existing during the current year have resulted in a normal crop; and that the retention of an agent is desirable for the prompt placing of car orders and the receipting for outgoing shipments.

Mr. W. E. Goodyear, a farmer, and president of an irrigation company, testified as to the results obtained by bean raising on irrigated land. It appears that the yield approximates 25 sacks per acre when irrigated against a yield of six sacks per acre on the same land when not irrigated and if the natural rainfall was depended upon. The witness anticipates a material increase in bean tonnage as the irrigation systems in the vicinity of Somis are further developed.

Mr. H. Fowler, engaged at Somis in the manufacture of concrete irrigating pipe and the installation of irrigating systems, testified as to the volume of his shipments and the inconvenience anticipated if the service of an agent were to be discontinued.

Mr. Richard Bard, a property owner in the section tributary to Somis station, testified as to the development of the adjacent territory and as to the planting of walnut groves and citrus orchards which will be on a shipping basis in about two years; as to the subdivision of large tracts into smaller holdings and the resultant intensive cultivation of the smaller areas; and that, in his opinion, the development of the area tributary to Somis station will be retarded if the agency should be closed by reason of the inconvenience to the patrons of applicant in the transaction of their business with the railroad.

Mrs. D. J. Baptiste, president of the Somis Thursday Club, and representing 67 families, testified that inconvenience would result to passengers if the agency station were to be closed.

We have given careful consideration to the record in this proceeding and we conclude therefrom that the territory tributary to Somis is in a state of development, due to breaking up of large land holdings, irrigation and planting of citrus orchards and walnut groves, which will materially increase the volume of freight tonnage within the succeeding two or three years.

In view of the development now in progress in the territory tributary to Somis, we are of the opinion that the station should not be closed during the months as herein applied for and that the application should be denied without prejudice. Applicant will be required to furnish the Commission with a statement of revenue and expenses for the yearly period ending June 30, 1927, at which time if applicant so desires, the matter will be reopened for further consideration.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been held on the above entitled application, the matter having been duly submitted, the Commission being now fully advised and basing its order on the conclusions and findings of fact as appearing in the opinion which precedes this order,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that this application be and the same is denied without prejudice.

Applicant is hereby required to keep an accurate account of the revenues and expenses resulting from the maintenance of the agency station at Somis for the yearly period ending June 30, 1927, and to submit such account to this Commission.

The Commission reserves the right to take such further order or orders in this proceeding as to it shall appear just and proper or as, in its opinion, the public convenience and necessity may require.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 14th day of December, 1926.

H. B. Brundage  
A. J. Stewart  
James D. ...  
Leon ...  
Thos. ...  
COMMISSIONERS.