

Decision No. 24482.

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

<p>In the Matter of the Application of the SOUTHERN PACIFIC COMPANY for authority to close the agency at Guinda, County of Yolo, State of California.</p>
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Application No. 17645.

Roy G. Hillebrand, for Applicant.  
J. J. Deuel, for Protestant, Cali-  
fornia Farm Bureau Federation.

BY THE COMMISSION:

O P I N I O N

In this application Southern Pacific Company requests authority to discontinue its agency at Guinda, Yolo County.

A public hearing was held at Woodland, December 1, 1931, by Examiner Kennedy. At this hearing the matter was submitted.

Guinda is located on the Rumsey Branch of Southern Pacific Company, approximately five miles from the end of the line at Rumsey and 15.7 miles north of Esparto. Rumsey and Esparto are the two nearest agency stations.

A mixed train is operated daily except Sunday. According to current time schedules, this train leaves the junction point with the main line at Elmira at 6:00 A.M., arriving at Rumsey at 9:55 A.M., and returning leaves Rumsey at 10:25 A.M., arriving at Elmira at 1:35 P.M. The train is due at

Guinda outbound at 9:38 A.M. and inbound at 10:40 A.M. Being a mixed train, the performance varies with the amount of work on the branch.

Applicant presented an exhibit at the hearing showing the amount of business handled at this agency during the two years ending September 30, 1931, indicating that the revenue from this station had decreased considerably during the last twelve months. Some of the figures shown on this exhibit are as follows:

	<u>Year Ended</u> <u>Sept. 30, 1930.</u>	<u>Year Ended</u> <u>Sept. 30, 1931.</u>
Carload Revenue,	\$6,244.	\$3,415.
Less-than-carload Revenue,	1,763.	962.
Passenger Revenue,	<u>46.</u>	<u>98.</u>
Total,	\$8,053.	\$4,475.

The station expense for the year ending September 30, 1931, was \$1,674. In the event the agency is closed, applicant proposes to operate this station as a non-agency point and handle shipments in the manner which is customary at non-agency stations. A local merchant has agreed to act as custodian of the key to the freight house in the event the agency is closed.

The application was protested by the California Farm Bureau and residents of the community. Protestants introduced evidence showing that, because of almost complete absence of water for irrigation purposes occasioned by the low water level in Clear Lake, there had been a crop failure in this territory during the season of 1931 and that conditions in 1930 were not normal. It was protestants' position that in normal years there would be sufficient revenue from the Guinda Station to warrant the company providing an agent. Protestants also complained that if this agency was closed there would be no telegraph facilities on the

Rumsey Branch beyond Esparto, a distance of twenty (20) miles, and that shippers would experience considerable inconvenience in securing cars on short notice. This would apply particularly to the ordering of iced cars for the shipment of perishable products.

While the Company would continue to maintain an agent at Rumsey, it develops that this is not a telegraph station and the only means of contact that this agent has with the operating officials is through the train crew of the local freight or by long distance telephone, presumably at the expense of the patron.

It is applicant's contention that the chief need for an agent at this station is to handle the less-than-carload business and that the amount of such business no longer warrants the expense of maintaining an agent. While, to a considerable extent, this is true, the amount of less-than-carload revenue cannot be taken as the sole measure of the need for a representative of the Company in a community. The volume of carload revenue cannot be completely ignored and other factors must also be given consideration, such as the nature of the surrounding territory, the distance to other points where the public may have contact with an agent for the purpose of transacting business or securing information, the kind of commodities shipped or received and the number of patrons and the use they make of the facility.

From statistics submitted with the application, the following table of station data which, to a certain extent are

an index of the use the public makes of the agency, has been prepared:

Station Data for Year Ending June 30, 1931

Number of L.C.L. shipments received	635	
Number of L.C.L. shipments forwarded	<u>229</u>	
Total		874
Carloads forwarded	50	
Carloads received	<u>7</u>	
Total number of carloads		57
Pieces of baggage handled		32
Sacks of mail handled		1,248
Express shipments handled		1,016
Western Union messages		248

In the present case, it appears that Guinda is located near the middle of a fertile valley and that the principal shipments are products of agriculture, principally fresh fruit, dried fruits and nuts. The nature of these commodities is such that the presence of an agent can be of considerable value to the shipper, such as placing orders for refrigerator cars and the issuance of clean bills of lading. While it is true that the Company proposes to maintain an agent at Rumsey, five miles distant, it appears that this office is without telegraph facilities and while the providing of telegraph service is not a duty of the applicant in this proceeding, the question of whether or not such telegraph service is available to the public depends largely on whether or not the Railroad Company maintains an agent at Guinda. It further appears that in normal years a larger tonnage originates at Guinda than at the Rumsey Station.

The Commission believes that serious consideration should also be given to the fact that this district depends for

irrigation almost entirely on the amount of water in Clear Lake and that during the year 1931 the water level in this lake was below the level of the outlet and that the Capay Valley was entirely without water from this source. The weather indications to date are that the current year will be one of much more favorable water conditions and it is not unlikely that the volume of business handled at Guinda this season may require the services of an agent.

After giving all of these factors consideration, the Commission is of the opinion that applicant should provide an agent at this station for the balance of the current year at least and if at the end of 1932 it appears that the agency is not receiving sufficient patronage to warrant its longer continuance, applicant may reopen the proceeding for further determination.

O R D E R

Southern Pacific Company having made application for authority to discontinue its agency at Guinda, Yolo County, public hearing having been held and the matter having been submitted and now being ready for decision,

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the above entitled application be denied, without prejudice.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 15<sup>th</sup> day of February, 1932.

C. S. Harvey  
Leon Swindell  
W. J. Lee  
W. B. Harris  
Fred G. Stewart  
 Commissioners.