

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 20314.

BEFORE THE RAILROAD COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA.

In the Matter of the Application of Napa Valley Bus Company for an order authorizing the elimination of the second stop at Southern Pacific Company tracks on Soscol Avenue.

Application No. 20107.

C. E. Brown, Manager, for Applicant.
H. W. Hobbs, for Southern Pacific Company, Protestant.
H. C. Lucas, for Pacific Greyhound Lines, Inc.

BY THE COMMISSION:

OPINION

In this proceeding the Napa valley Bus Company requests authority to pass over a multiple track grade crossing with one instead of two steps. The Pacific Greyhound Lines, Inc., also operates stages over this grade crossing and joins with applicant in this request.

A public hearing was conducted in this matter by Examiner Hunter at San Francisco, October 14, 1935.

The grade crossing involved herein is located in the southeasterly portion of the City of Napa, where Soscol Avenue, a paved State highway, crosses four tracks of the Southern Pacific Company (Crossing No. AB-45.4). The layout of the four tracks at the grade crossing involved is as follows:

Table with 3 columns: Class of Track, Approximate Distance Between Center Line of Tracks, and Distance Along Center Line of Track at Right Angles to Soscol Avenue. Rows include House Track, Main Line, Side Track, and Spur Track.

The distance between tracks along the highway exceeds the right angle distance due to the fact that Soscol Avenue intersects the railroad tracks at an angle of approximately thirty (30) degrees.

Paragraph 16 of the Commission's General Order No. 86 provides that drivers of vehicles operated by automotive passenger stage corporations and/or by transportation companies, as such are defined, respectively, by the Public Utilities Act, and the Auto Stage and Truck Transportation Act, shall before crossing the tracks of any steam or electric interurban railroad, bring such vehicles to a full and complete stop not less than ten (10) feet, or more than fifty (50) feet from the nearest rail of the railroad over which the highway crosses.⁽¹⁾ In this proceeding authority is sought, in so far as the Commission has the power to grant applicant the right, to cross the four tracks referred to above, with a single stop to be made in advance of the first track and eliminate the second stop between the main line and the siding. Previous to July, 1934, it was the practice of the drivers of the Napa Valley Bus Company and the Pacific Greyhound Lines, Inc., to make but one stop in negotiating this four-track grade crossing. Since that date, however, it has been the practice of the operators to make two stops - one before reaching the first track and another between the main line and the side track. This practice, applicant and the Pacific Greyhound Lines, Inc., contend results in an increase rather than a decrease of hazard at this grade crossing. The increased hazard, it is alleged, results from

⁽¹⁾Section 576 of Chapter 12 of the vehicle Code provides in part as follows: "Certain vehicles must stop at all railroad grade crossings. (a) The driver of any motor vehicle carrying passengers for hire, or any school bus carrying any school child, or any motor truck carrying explosive substances or inflammable liquids as a cargo or part of a cargo, before crossing at grade any track or tracks of a steam railway, interurban or suburban electric railroad, shall stop such vehicle not less than 10 nor more than 50 feet from the nearest rail of such track, etc."

a second stop on the highway which has resulted in a number of accidents, or near accidents, due to following vehicles colliding with the stages.

The record shows that there are less than ten train movements on Southern Pacific Company's tracks, including switch moves over this grade crossing per day and that these movements are at a slow speed of not to exceed ten miles per hour. This low speed results from the fact that there is a grade crossing between the Southern Pacific Company's tracks involved herein and the main line track of the San Francisco, Napa and Calistoga Railway between Vallejo and Calistoga, immediately north of Sasccol Avenue. All trains of the Southern Pacific Company's lines are brought to a stop before crossing the tracks of the San Francisco, Napa and Calistoga Railway. The view at this grade crossing is unobstructed. The highway traffic on Sasccol Avenue, which is a paved highway, is comparatively heavy as it is an important highway artery between Napa and Vallejo.

The Napa Valley Bus Company operates three schedules each way daily over this crossing and the Pacific Greyhound Lines, Inc., operates ten schedules each way daily.

The granting of this application was opposed by Southern Pacific Company on the general ground that vehicles operated by automotive passenger stage corporations and/or transportation companies should be required to stop at all grade crossings in conformity with the Commission's General Order No. 86 and, furthermore, that this particular grade crossing constitutes two crossings rather than one since the distance between the main line and side track is in excess of fifty feet.

In summing up the evidence in this proceeding, it is clear that imposing any unwarranted stops for any class of vehicle on this highway creates a hazard along this important high-speed highway artery. Rail movements over this grade crossing are less

hazardous than is ordinarily the case due to the fact that trains move at slow speeds and the operation is rather infrequent. If another track was constructed between the main line and the side track, the question involved in this proceeding would disappear as it would be practically impossible for a long vehicle to make the second stop under this plan between the tracks.

The record appears to justify the conclusion that the advantages of permitting stages and certificated trucks to operate over the four-track grade crossing involved without making a second stop more than offsets the disadvantage surrounding this practice, therefore, the Commission will authorize applicant and all automotive passenger stage corporations or transportation companies to consider this as a single crossing and require but one stop in advance of reaching the first track. This authority is granted in so far as the Commission has jurisdiction in the premise and in no way relieves the operators of such vehicles from the full compliance of the vehicle Code of this State.

O R D E R

A public hearing having been had and the matter having been submitted,

The California Railroad Commission Hereby Declares, in so far as it has jurisdiction so to do, that the crossing at grade of Southern Pacific Company's four-track line over Soscol Avenue, City of Napa, California, (Crossing No. AB-45.4), is one crossing and, therefore

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that vehicles operated by automotive stage corporations and/or transportation companies, as such are defined, respectively by the Public Utilities Act and the Auto Stage and Truck Transportation Act, are authorized to cross over said grade crossing by making but one stop in either direction

and in a manner as prescribed in the Commission's General Order No. 86.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty (20) days from the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 4th day of November 1935.

Leon Whitely

M. G. Carr

M. B. Hession

M. J. [unclear]

John R. [unclear]

Commissioners.