

ORIGINAL

Decision No. 53374

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of PACIFIC GREYHOUND LINES )  
 for authority to discontinue and abandon )  
 bus service between Bolsa Junction and ) Application No. 36996  
 Maricopa Junction. )

- Douglas Brookman, for applicant.
- Henry G. Baron, City Attorney, Taft, for City of Taft and City of Maricopa, protestants.
- Tobriner, Lazarus, Brundage and Weyhart by Robert Le Prohn, for Amalgamated Associations of Street, Electric Railway & Motor Coach Employees of America, Divisions 1222 and 1225, protestant.
- Arthur L. Blank, City Attorney, Coalinga, for City of Coalinga, protestant.
- T. S. Haworth, for Orange Belt Stages, interested party.
- Earl C. Cook, doing business as Cook's Stages, interested party.
- Charles W. Overhouse, for the Commission's staff.

O P I N I O N

In the above-entitled proceeding Pacific Greyhound Lines requests authority to discontinue passenger stage operations between Bolsa Junction and Maricopa and intermediate points, the principal ones of which are Hollister, Coalinga, Avenal, McKittrick, Taft and Maricopa. A public hearing was held before Examiner Leo C. Paul at Coalinga and at Taft on October 25 and 26, 1955, respectively. Notice of the hearing was posted in all of applicant's depots along the line involved as well as in all equipment used in providing service over the route through the ten days preceeding and on the date of hearing.

Bolsa Junction is about three to four miles south of Gilroy at the junction of U. S. Highway 101 and applicant's route of operations involved in this proceeding. Maricopa Junction is the southerly terminus of said route where it joins U. S. Highway

99 in the southerly part of the San Joaquin Valley approximately 25 miles east of Maricopa and about 14 miles south of Greenfield Corners. The total over-all length of the route between Bolsa Junction and Maricopa Junction is approximately 237 miles. The portion of the route between Bolsa Junction and Coalinga, a distance of about 115 miles, is through an agricultural area as far as Hollister and Tres Pinos the remainder of the distance being devoted principally to large stock ranches. The area from Coalinga to Maricopa Junction consists principally of the characteristic desert-type of land in the southwesterly portion of the San Joaquin Valley which is devoted primarily to the production of oil. Some portions of this area are being developed agriculturally.

The evidence shows that applicant began operating this line (commonly referred to as the Airline) on September 30, 1951. Such operation has continued to date with the exception of a strike period in the Spring of 1952. In the beginning one through round-trip schedule was operated daily between San Francisco and Los Angeles. In response to the urging of various communities and in an attempt to overcome the continuing decline in the traffic served by the operation applicant inaugurated a second through round-trip schedule on June 16, 1953. While this increased service produced some additional revenue it was insufficient according to applicant's witness, in comparison with the additional cost to justify the operation of two schedules. Therefore, according to the witness, on September 9, 1953, the service was reduced to one round trip daily. Beginning February 10, 1954, the service was further reduced to one round trip daily between Los Angeles and Coalinga and one round trip between Coalinga and San Jose on

Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. At the latter point connections are made for service to and from points north. Again attempting to induce greater use of the line, applicant re-established a second round trip through schedule between Los Angeles and San Francisco on June 16, 1954. Failing to generate any consequential increase in traffic the second schedule was discontinued on September 8, 1954, and a return to the service as of February 10 was made. Indicative of the down trend in the patronage of the line Exhibit No. 1 shows that during the 12 months of 1953 over 23,000 passengers were transported compared to approximately 11,500 transported in the 12 months of 1954 or an average of approximately 2,000 passengers a month during 1953 and approximately 1,000 a month in 1954. In the first 9 months of 1955 a total of 8,363 passengers were transported which averaged about 930 passengers each month. The total passenger, express and newspaper revenue for the years of 1953 and 1954 averaged \$0.214 and \$0.169 per bus mile respectively. The comparable figure for the first 9 months of 1955 was \$0.149. According to applicant's witness the direct cost of operation of the line is approximately 31 cents per bus mile.

Applicant's operating statement (Exhibit No. 3) for the period January 1 - September 30, 1955, inclusive, shows the following results:

	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Per Bus Mile</u>
<u>Bus Miles</u>	<u>95,344</u>	
<u>Operating Revenues</u>	<u>\$14,176</u>	14.87¢
Equipment Maintenance	\$ 5,693	5.97¢
Transportation	11,756	12.33
Station	3,985	4.18
Traffic Solicitation and Advertising	973	1.02
Insurance and Safety	1,077	1.13
Administrative and General	1,344	1.41
Depreciation	2,517	2.64
Operating Taxes and Licenses	<u>2,507</u>	<u>2.63</u>
	<u>\$29,852</u>	<u>31.31¢</u>
<u>Operating Loss</u>	<u>(\$15,676)</u>	<u>16.44¢</u>

The expenses shown were said to be direct costs compared to the full costs of operation of about 39¢ per bus mile. The average seat occupancy on the line for the same period January - September 1955 amounted to 18.15 per cent (Exhibit No. 4). Applicant's witness asserted that everything possible and feasible has been done in order to stimulate the traffic but with little success. He further pointed out that the greater part of the route is through sparsely populated rural areas which have little and in most cases no traffic potential. He also noted that the greater part of the line's traffic consists of passengers traveling to or from Coalinga, Taft, and Maricopa, on the one hand, and to or from Los Angeles, Glendale, Burbank, San Fernando and San Jose, on the other hand, who would have other common carrier services available if applicant should be allowed to discontinue its service as proposed. Such other services would include Orange Belt Stages and Cook's Stages in connections with other lines of applicant or other carriers. Exhibit No. 4 shows that during the week of October 8 to 14, 1955 inclusive, applicant transported a total of 149 passengers over the Airline of which 106 traveled between the

points noted. An official of applicant testified that the Airline route is not a natural one for through traffic. But nevertheless he had instructed applicant's agents to route through passengers via the Airline when feasible. This practice was continued until numerous complaints of passengers so routed were received. They complained principally as to the characteristics of the highway involved, particularly the segment between Coalinga and Hollister, and the longer time required over this route than over applicant's routes along the coast and through the San Joaquin Valley. The witness stated, in effect, that this highway is narrow, has numerous short and blind curves, is poorly aligned and, despite its scenic attributes, is generally unsatisfactory as a highway to be used for through traffic as compared with its routes between Los Angeles and San Francisco over U. S. Highways 101 and 99.

While the record shows that the route via Coalinga is the shortest route between Los Angeles and San Francisco being 413 actual miles, it is, however, the longest route on a constructive mile basis being 484 miles as compared to 459½ constructive miles via Fresno and 476½ constructive miles via the coast route. The record shows that the portion of the highway south from Coalinga to Maricopa Junction while superior to the remainder of the roadway is through a vary sparsely settled area. The only town of any consequence between Coalinga and Taft, a distance of over 90 miles, being Avenal with an estimated population of 4,000.

In opposition to the proposal of applicant, the officials of the cities of Coalinga and Taft called approximately 18 witnesses practically all of whom have had occasion to use applicant's service between points on the line involved. Representatives of the Chamber of Commerce of Taft and Hollister also testified in

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(1) Constructive mileage is an increased mileage obtained by adding an increment to the actual highway mileage to compensate for adverse physical highway conditions, such as grades, curvatures, poor surface and congestion which increase the cost of operation over that normally encountered.

opposition to applicant's proposal.

Almost without exception witnesses who had occasion to use applicant's service pointed out that they had experienced considerable difficulty in obtaining information from applicant's agents, particularly at Los Angeles and San Francisco, with respect to service between those two points and points on the Airline in the San Joaquin Valley. Most of these witnesses stated that on telephone or personal inquiries they were informed that applicant operated no service to Coalinga, Taft, Los Angeles or San Francisco. However, upon persistent questioning they eventually obtained information that a service by applicant between those points was available. Many of these witnesses expressed the opinion that as the result of experiences which they have had they were of the opinion that applicant was using every endeavor to discourage the use of the line. Characteristic of this testimony was that of a witness who stated that he uses the service five or six times a year and was familiar with the scheduled leaving times but in order to check any changes he followed the practice, when in San Francisco, of telephoning applicant's agent to learn the time of departure of the schedule for Coalinga. According to his testimony he was advised each time to use applicant's main line service to Goshen Junction and there transfer to a connecting service which would transport him to Coalinga, his destination.

Many of the witnesses as well as representatives of the protesting cities emphasized their opinion that discrimination is being exercised by applicant by its reluctance and failure to route through traffic via the Airline route which would justify applicant in maintaining the service. As heretofore noted applicant

discontinued routing through traffic over the Airline because of the complaints of passengers so routed.

A representative of the Orange Belt Stage Line pointed out it can provide service between Coalinga and points along California Highway 198 connecting with the main line service of Pacific Greyhound Lines, as well as rail service, at King City and at Fresno. It can also provide a connecting service at Hanford and at Goshen Junction with other carriers serving those points.

A representative of Cook's Stage Line at Bakersfield testified that it conducts a passenger stage operation between Bakersfield, Greenfield Corners, Taft and McKittrick under which it could provide a service, connecting with applicant at Bakersfield or Greenfield Corners, for passengers desiring to travel to or from points served by Cook's, on the Airline, and to or from other points served by applicant which are not involved herein. Cook's Stage Line also provides a service to and from Maricopa via Taft for the transportation of express and the witness stated that in the event the Commission should authorize applicant's request Cook's Stage Line would seek a certificate to transport passengers to and from Maricopa. Likewise the town of Hollister will continue to receive its present service by applicant of four daily round trip schedules to and from Chittenden Pass Junction on U. S. Highway 101. Applicant operates 14 daily round trip schedules between San Francisco and Los Angeles over the latter highway.

After full consideration of all the evidence of record it is our opinion and we find that public convenience and necessity no longer require passenger stage service by applicant between Bolsa Junction and Maricopa Junction and intermediate points via Hollister, Coalinga and Taft. In reaching this conclusion the Commission is aware of the fact that some users of the service

will suffer some inconveniences. On the other hand the evidence shows that the chief traffic centers on the Airline route have other common carrier passenger facilities which can be utilized to meet most of the transportation needs to and from Los Angeles, San Francisco and other points referred to in the record. The continued and expanding losses and diminishing use of the service impose an undue burden upon the remainder of applicant's operations which is unjustified. Therefore, the application will be granted.

O R D E R

An application therefor having been made, a public hearing held thereon, the matter having been duly submitted and the Commission having found that public convenience and necessity no longer require the passenger stage operation between Bolsa Junction and Maricopa Junction,

IT IS ORDERED:

(1) That Pacific Greyhound Lines is hereby authorized to discontinue passenger stage service between Bolsa Junction and Maricopa Junction and intermediate points and the operative right therefor as created by Decision No. 47907 in Application No. 31883 and set forth as Route No. 13.17 at First Revised Page 39 is hereby revoked.

(2) That public notice of discontinuance of service as authorized in paragraph (1) hereof shall be conspicuously posted in all equipment of applicant operating between the points involved herein and all stations of applicant at San Francisco, San Jose, Gilroy, Hollister, Coalinga, Taft, Maricopa and Los Angeles for not less than fifteen days next preceeding such discontinuance. Proof of such posting shall be furnished to the Commission within



not less than five days thereafter.

(3) That Appendix A of Decision No. 47907, Application No. 31883 is hereby amended by including therein Second Revised Page 39 which is attached hereto as Appendix A.

(4) That within 60 days after the date hereof and on not less than ten days' notice to the Commission and to the public, applicant shall file in triplicate, and concurrently make effective, appropriate tariffs and timetables reflecting the authority herein granted.

The effective date of this order shall be twenty days after the date hereof.

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 10<sup>th</sup> day of July, 1956.

*John E. Mitchell*  
 President

*Justin J. Adams*

*Paul J. Johnson*

*William J. Goble*

*R. H. Kirby*  
 Commissioners

- 13.13 - Between North June Lake Junction and South June Lake Junction:

From North June Lake Junction, over unnumbered highway via Carsons Camp and June Lake to South June Lake Junction.

- 13.14 - Between Brown Junction and Inyokern Junction:

From junction U. S. Highway 395 and U. S. Highway 6 (Brown Junction), over U. S. Highway 6 to Inyokern Junction, to be operated as an alternate route.

- 13.15 - Between United States Naval Test Station and Inyokern:

From United States Naval Test Station, over unnumbered highway to Inyokern.

- 13.16 - Between North Saugus Road Junction and South Saugus Road Junction:

From North Saugus Road Junction, over U. S. Highway 6 to South Saugus Road Junction, to be operated as an alternate route.

- \*13.17 - Intentionally left blank.

- 13.18 - Between South Tagus and Tulare Airport:

From South Tagus, over U. S. Highway 99 to Tulare Airport, to be operated as an alternate route.

Issued by California Public Utilities Commission.

\*Revoked by Decision No. 53374, Application No. 36996.

Correction No. 145.