

**ORIGINAL**

Decision No. 64377

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Application of SOUTHERN PACIFIC )  
COMPANY for an order prescribing )  
its established timetable speeds )  
as the permissible speeds for )  
the operation of trains within )  
the San Fernando Valley portion )  
of the City of Los Angeles. )

Application No. 44556

(Filed June 28, 1962)

Commission investigation into the )  
safety, maintenance, operations, )  
use and protection of certain )  
crossings at grade of public )  
streets and the tracks of the )  
Southern Pacific Company in the )  
San Fernando Valley portion of )  
the City of Los Angeles, the City )  
of Burbank and the City of San )  
Fernando, all in the State of )  
California. )

Case No. 7406

Additional Appearance

Richard D. Gravelle, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

An additional day of hearing in the above proceeding was held in Los Angeles before Examiner Kent C. Rogers on September 5, 1962, at which evidence was presented and at the conclusion the matter was submitted.

As a result of three days of hearing in Burbank on these matters an interim opinion and order (Decision No. 64180) was issued. This decision prescribed the speed limits at the crossings embraced in the Order of Investigation in Case No. 7406, thus determining the issues presented in

Application No. 44596. It was agreed at the outset of the September 5, 1962, hearing that the additional issues to be determined are (1) the timing of crossing gates, and (2) the types of lights and signals to be used in conjunction with railroad-crossing protection where the crossing is closely adjacent to a highway.

The staff witness recommended, among other things, that at the crossings in question, (1) approach circuits and timing relays at all gate-protected crossings be adjusted so that gate arms will be in a lowered position for approximately 25 seconds, with time limits of from 20 to 30 seconds in advance of the normally fastest train, and (2) where gate-protected crossings are within 200 feet of a signalized street intersection, the traffic signals be interconnected with railroad signals and the pre-emption phase initiated by an approaching train first display a green interval of sufficient limit to clear all vehicles from the track area.

A witness for the city of Los Angeles testified that in his opinion the design of the pre-emption phase traffic signals which the city installs is more feasible than the design recommended by the engineer; that in 1958 it recommended coordinated signals whereby the intersecting street traffic should be stopped by flashing red lights rather than green signals (Exhibit 62); and that green clearance signals conflict with the red crossing signals and create a hazard. The city also presented a study, based on tests made on non-gated railroad crossings in the Harbor District, concluding that red and amber light warning signals at railroad crossings in the vicinity of street crossings are safer than the green signals recommended by the staff (Exhibit 64).

We find that there is no persuasive evidence in the record to outweigh the recommendation of the Commission's engineer that gate arms be lowered 20 to 30 seconds in advance of the normally fastest train; that where gate-protected crossings are within 200 feet of a signalized street intersection, the traffic signals should be interconnected with railroad signals; and in the pre-emption phase initiated by an approaching train the traffic signals should first present a green signal. With respect to the pre-emption phase, the green signal is essential to allow vehicles "trapped" on the tracks to move to safety.

We therefore find and conclude that recommendations Nos. 6 and 7 in Exhibit 48 should be embraced in the order herein.

O R D E R

The Commission having found as above and good cause appearing,

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. At all crossings listed in the order of investigation herein, where protected by automatic crossing gates, either now or in the future, approach circuits and timing relays shall be adjusted so that the gate-arms will be in a lowered position for approximately 25 seconds with limits of from 20 to 30 seconds in advance of the normally fastest train.

2. Where gate-protected crossings are now or in the future within 200 feet of a signalized street intersection, the respective traffic signals and railroad signals shall be interconnected so that the pre-emption phase initiated by an approaching train shall display a green interval of sufficient length to clear vehicles from the track.

3. The Southern Pacific Company shall within one year after the date hereof comply with the provision of ordering paragraph 1 at these crossings already equipped with automatic gates.

4. The City of Los Angeles shall within ninety days after the date hereof comply with the provisions of ordering paragraph 2 at those crossings already equipped with automatic gates.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 9th day of OCTOBER, 1962.

George H. Grover  
President

John E. Ashhill

John J. ...

Carroll O. ...

Fredrick B. Holbeck  
Commissioners