

ORIGINALDecision No. 65833

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Investigation into the adequacy
and sufficiency of seating space
in passenger cars operated by
Southern Pacific Company between
points in California.

Case No. 6855

(Appearances are listed in Decision No. 62991 issued December 29, 1961 herein. The appearance of William V. Ellis for the California Legislative Board, Brotherhood of Locomotive Firemen and Enginemen is changed from interested party to protestant.)

O P I N I O N

On April 11, 1963, respondent Southern Pacific Company filed its petition for modification of the interim order herein (Decision No. 62991 issued December 29, 1961), requesting an ex parte order authorizing respondent to convert its existing passenger cars with 41-1/2-inch seat spacing to 39-inch seat spacing.

Hearing on the petition for modification was held in San Francisco before Examiner Cline on June 12, 1963. At the conclusion of the hearing the matter was taken under submission.

Evidence was introduced to show that pursuant to the interim order in Decision No. 62991 the 32 lightweight chair cars which formerly had 41-1/2-inch seat spacing were reconverted from 36-inch seat spacing to 39-inch seat spacing. The reconverted cars have a capacity of 1,702 seats compared with an original capacity of 1,560 seats, an increase of 142 seats or the equivalent of 3 additional lightweight chair cars. Since the reconversion of

these cars no public complaints have been brought to the attention of respondent. Similarly no public complaint has been made with regard to the 39-inch seat spacing on the Cotton Belt passenger cars which have been in operation in respondent's passenger train service during the past ten or eleven years.

In order to economically provide additional capacity during periods of peak passenger demand, respondent desires to reduce the seat spacing on 33 of its passenger cars from 41-1/2 inches to 39 inches. This will produce 332 additional seats or approximately the equivalent of 7 additional cars which are very much needed during the periods of heavy travel. As the respondent proposes to do the work of conversion only as the cars come in for normal shopping, the work will be spread over a period of at least two or three years.

Respondent does not propose to alter any of its leg-rest cars which are used primarily for coach passengers traveling long distances, enabling them to sleep on the transcontinental trains.

The Commission finds that the conversion of the 33 light-weight passenger cars from 41-1/2-inch to 39-inch seat spacing will not render the seating on said cars improper, inadequate, or insufficient for the health, safety and convenience of the passengers, and concludes that the petition of respondent for modification of Decision No. 62991 should be granted.

ORDER

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED that the respondent Southern Pacific Company is authorized to convert its existing 33 passenger cars with 41-1/2-inch seat spacing to not less than 39-inch seat spacing.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 6th day of AUGUST 1, 1963.

William B. Bennett
President
W. B. Bennett
W. B. Bennett
George H. Trover
Fredrick B. Holbrook
Commissioners