

Decision No. 86853

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of	)	
MENDOCINO COAST RAILWAY dba	)	
CALIFORNIA WESTERN RAILROAD	)	
for authority under SS 454 and 491 of	)	
the Public Utilities Code to establish	)	Application No. 56889
a special roundtrip passenger excursion	)	(Filed November 24, 1976)
fare between Fort Bragg and Willits,	)	
California on the one hand and Mile Post	)	
21.3 (Northspur, California) on the	)	
other hand.	)	

O P I N I O N

Applicant, Mendocino Coast Railway, a railroad corporation, doing business as California Western Railroad, requests authority to establish special round trip passenger excursion fares between Fort Bragg and Willits, California, on the one hand, and North Spur at Milepost 21.3, on the other hand.

In addition to the basic daily motor car service, applicant presently operates one extra, steam or diesel powered excursion train during the summer months with about five cars. The excursion train does not stop for passengers at intermediate stations but makes one round trip between Fort Bragg and Willits on days it is operated. In conformity with Local Passenger Tariff 3-K, the only fares applicable on this train are the one-way and round-trip fares between Fort Bragg and Willits, i.e.: Adults \$8.20, Children \$4.10 round trip and Adults \$5.45, Children \$2.75 one-way.

Applicant proposes to operate an additional extra excursion train, for a total of two extra trains during the summer tourist season, one originating at Fort Bragg, and one at Willits. These trains will not, however, operate through between Fort Bragg and Willits, but will turn around at Milepost 21.3, Northspur, each making two round trips on the days operated. The arrival and departure times at Milepost 21.3 on each round trip will overlap to also provide

by transfer between trains, both one-way and round-trip service between Fort Bragg and Willits. The new round-trip fares between Fort Bragg or Willits and Northspur will be \$5.75 for adults and \$3.25 for children.

Applicant feels these shorter round-trips would be more attractive and would provide additional seating capacity for the tourist patrons. At present, adult round trip fares applying on the basic motor car service to Milepost 21.3 (Northspur) are \$4.50 from Fort Bragg and \$3.90 from Willits. Under the proposed excursion service, seating capacity will be increased to slightly more than double the present capacity; however, it is not anticipated that patronage will double.

With this new service, applicant hopes to turn around its present loss trend so that it may continue to provide this scenic excursion attraction for tourists.

Applicant has received letters in support of its new service from the Cities of Willits and Fort Bragg and the Fort Bragg-Mendocino Coast and Willits Chambers of Commerce.

The Transportation Division staff has reviewed the application and recommends that in absence of protest or request for public hearing, it should be granted by ex parte order.

Copies of this application were served on all interested parties and the proposed fares posted by applicant at all its stations. No protest has been received. Since the service involved is a summer season tourist attraction, the provisions of Sections 730.3 and 730.5 of the Public Utilities Code are not applicable.

The Commission encourages experimentation by carriers in circumstances such as this where they desire to modify their existing operations in order to present a more attractive service to the public.

The Commission finds that the new excursion fares are justified and concludes that a public hearing is not necessary and

the application should be granted.

ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. California Western Railroad is authorized to establish the increased fares as set forth in the application. Tariff publications authorized to be made as a result of this order may be made effective not earlier than five days after the effective date of this order on not less than five days' notice to the Commission and to the public.

2. The authority shall expire unless exercised within one hundred and eighty days after the effective date of this order.

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

Dated at San Francisco, California, this 11<sup>th</sup> day of JANUARY, 1977.

Robert Bateman  
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 President

William J. ...  
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Commissioners

Commissioner Vernon L. Sturgeon, being necessarily absent, did not participate in the disposition of this proceeding.