

#### Decision No. <u>87250</u>

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Investigation ) for the purpose of considering and ) determining minimum rates for ) transportation of used household ) goods and related property state- ) wide as provided in Minimum Rate ) Tariff 4-B and the revisions or ) reissues thereof.

Case No. 5330 Petition for Modification No. 95 (Filed November 28, 1975; amended February 2, 1976, April 7, 1976, December 28, 1976, and March 8, 1977)

(Appearances are shown in Appendix A to Decisions Nos. 86784 and 86698.)

#### Additional Appearances

Brodie Ernewein, for IBM Corporation, interested party. George H. Morrison and Charles F. Gerughty, Jr., for the Commission staff.

#### FINAL OPINION

California Moving and Storage Association, Inc. (CMSA), a nonprofit corporation whose membership is composed of approximately 600 carriers engaged in the transportation of household goods and related articles, seeks increases in the long-distance and local (hourly) moving rates set forth in Minimum Rate Tariff 4-B (MRT 4-B).

Decision No. 86084 dated July 7, 1976 granted interim increases in the statewide long-distance moving rates and the hourly rates for local moving in Territories A and B. No increase was made in the hourly rates for local moving in Territory C, pending further hearing. At the initial hearing several local movers located in

-1-

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the San Fernando Valley testified in opposition to the interim increases in Territory C hourly rates proposed by petitioner. $^{\perp}$ 

Second interim Decision No. 86698 dated November 30, 1976 increased the hourly rates in Territory C, except within Los Angeles County. That decision found that no increase should be made in the minimum hourly rates in that portion of Territory C within Los Angeles County pending further hearing in this proceeding. $\frac{2}{3}$ 

The Fourth Amendment to Petition 95 filed March 8, 1977 seeks further increases in the minimum rates in MRT 4-B, including the hourly rates applicable within Los Angeles County. Public hearing, with respect to the relief sought in the Fourth Amendment to Petition 95, was held before Examiner Mallory at San Francisco on March 28, 1977 and the matter was submitted. Evidence in support of the relief sought was presented by petitioner. The staff presented

1/ Interim Decision No. 86084 states as follows (mimeo. page 8):

"A significant number of household goods carriers protest further increases in the hourly rates in MRT 4-B applicable in Territory C. Operations of the protesting carriers are confined to a radius of 50 miles of their bases of operations in Los Angeles County. Territory C, the largest in the state, covers a geographical area substantially greater than the service area of the protesting carriers. It appears from the testimony of the protesting carriers that their operations have been profitable and that their operations will continue to be profitable in the future without the sought increase in Territory C hourly rates. However, financial data to support those conclusions was not presented. We have asked our staff to develop results of operations for the group which appeared and a group which wrote letters in opposition to the increase. Such data will be presented without carrier identification to protect the confidentiality of the information gathered from the carriers."

2/ Decision No. 86933 dated February 1, 1977 denied the petition for rehearing of Decision No. 86698 filed by CMSA.

no evidence, but in its closing statement it recommended that a lower level of increased rates than proposed by petitioner be established in MRT 4-B.

### Background

Interim Decision No. 86084 contains the following ordering paragraphs:

"4. Staff is directed to review further the procedures by which deviations from the minimum rates may be granted pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 5195 and to make specific recommendations to the Commission in the forthcoming hearings.

"5. Staff is directed to review the business of moving used office and store fixtures and equipment and to present evidence on the question of whether such transportation should be regulated apart from the movement of used household goods.

"6. In future proceedings in this case, the Commission intends to base minimum rates on the level necessary to prevent predatory practices, rather than attempt to set minimum rates which would automatically or customarily be the going rates or to routinely offset higher costs through minimum rate increases. Parties seeking to increase minimum rates will bear the burden of showing that carriage at any lower level of rates would constitute a predatory practice, and that minimum rate increases are the most appropriate means for preventing such practices. Evidence of cost increases since the previous minimum rate decision, while relevant, will not be dispositive of this issue."

Decision No. 87047 dated March 9, 1977 in Case No. 9963 (investigation into rules and procedures for filing of freight tariffs or contracts by highway permit carriers) dismissed that proceeding, and announced that separate proceedings in the several continuing minimum rate cases would be issued to consider the establishment of a regulatory program whereby carriers would establish rates and initiate changes in rate levels. Concurrently, with the discontinuance of Case No. 9963, the Commission instituted Case No. 10278, an investigation to establish requirements to be met by applicants for highway carrier authority.

The concurring opinion of Commissioner Ross to Decision No. 87047 outlines his regulatory goals, and points out that "changing from the current minimum rate system to one compatible with antitrust laws and principles will and should take time". The concurring opinion indicates that pending completion of its investigation and the establishment of its new regulatory program, the Commission would grant offset relief.<sup>2/</sup> Decision No. 87048 in Case No. 5432 (Petition 945), et al., also issued on March 9, 1977, granted an interim increase in the minimum rates for the transportation of general commodities set forth in Minimum Rate Tariffs 2, 1-B, 9-B, 15, and 19. Finding 6 of that decision, which reads as follows, expresses our position:

> "6. We are not sympathetic to offset procedures as we have stated in several recent decisions in these cases; however, we cannot fail to recognize that carriers are faced with increased costs of doing business. Accordingly and reluctantly, we will adjust the minimum rates pending the possible adoption and implementation of a plan for reregulation of the trucking industry."

3/ The concurring opinion of Commissioner Ross to Decision No. 87047 states, in part, as follows:

> "(5) Changing from the current minimum rate system to one compatible with antitrust laws and principles will and should take time. The hearing process is well advanced in the case of some aspects of the industry, and has yet to begin in others. In granting offset relief today, the Commission once again is making a necessary practical compromise between the goals it has set forth and the realities of cost increases for the industry. I am convinced that the new procedural method suggested in this decision will allow the Commission to proceed with a transition to responsible, competitive ratemaking."

> > -4-

## Petitioner's Evidence

The Executive Director of CMSA presented a series of exhibits designed to show the changes in carrier operating costs since the minimum rates in MRT 4-B were last adjusted, the effect of these changes on total operating Costs, and the increases in minimum rates necessary to offset such cost changes. The cost changes measured in the CMSA studies are contractual wages and fringe benefits and payroll costs; and fuel, parts, and tire costs.

The principal increases in operating costs experienced by household goods carriers are in wage costs. The current minimum rates generally reflect wages as of July 1, 1975. Since that time carriers have experienced or will experience substantial wage increases. Household goods carriers and the Teamsters Union have not negotiated a master freight agreement. Separate agreements have been negotiated with each union local. Those agreements contain different provisions, and changes in wages and fringe benefits become effective on different dates. The wage agreements generally applicable within Territories A and B provide for an increase in wages tied to changes in the Federal Consumer Price Index on April 1, 1977 and a general wage increase effective July 1, 1977. The wage contracts generally applicable within Territory C do not provide for cost of living increases tied to changes in the Consumer Price Index, but the general wage increase provisions become effective on April 1, 1977.

Petitioner has measured the effect of contractual wage and fringe benefit increases effective April 1 and July 1, 1977. The increase in diesel fuel and the reduction in gasoline costs are based on average fuel costs set forth in Commission Data Bank Reports. Payroll taxes are based on statutory amounts. Workers' compensation insurance reflects the current manual rate adjusted for experience ratings. Maintenance and tire costs are increased based on the percentage changes in the Federal Wholesale Price Index for truck parts and tires. The increases in direct costs measured by CMSA were

-5-

then increased for indirect expenses and gross revenue expenses using the so-called "wage (cost) offset" method more fully described in <u>Re Minimum Rate Tariff 2</u> (1969) 70 CPUC  $277.\frac{L}{2}$ 

Petitioner determined that, using the wage (cost) offset method, total costs for movements under weight rates have increased by an average of 2.91 percent on April 1, 1977, and will increase by an average of 8.69 percent on July 1, 1977. Petitioner proposes to increase the present surcharge applicable to distance rates in cents per 100 pounds by 3 percentage points effective April 1, 1977 and by an additional  $5\frac{1}{2}$  percentage points on July 1, 1977.

Petitioner also proposes to increase the hourly rates in Territories A, B, and C effective April 1, 1977 and to further increase the Territory A and B rates effective July 1, 1977, based on the specific increases in hourly costs measured in its costs studies.<sup>2</sup> Distance rates in cents per piece and accessorial charges are proposed to be increased based on the average of the increases in hourly rates in Territories A, B, and C.

4/ The three offset methods described in Decision No. 76353 are the wage (cost) offset, the wage offset, and the direct wage offset. The wage (cost) offset method produces the highest total costs; the direct wage offset method results in the lowest total costs.

5/ The hourly rates are proposed to be increased as follows:

	TERRITORY A			TER	RITORY B	TERRITORY C			
Unit of Equipment:	Pres.	Prop.		Pres.	Pro	-qc	Pres.	Prop.	
		Apr.	Jul.		Apr.	Jul.		Apr.	
a. With Driver b. With Driver	1,980	<u>Apr.</u> 2,135	<u>Jul.</u> 2,305	1,685	<u>Apr.</u> 1,790	<u>Jul.</u> 1,890	1,825	<u>Apr.</u> 1,960	
and One Helper	3,630	3,945	4,275	2,925	3,100	3,275	3,195	3,445	
Additional Helpers, Per Man	1,265	1,370	1,590	835		945	905	1.045	

-6-

Petitioner's executive director also presented evidence with respect to the directive in Decision No. 86084 concerning predatory practices. At the request of CMSA, Exhibit 945-9, introduced by California Trucking Association (CTA) in Case No. 5432 (Petition 945), was incorporated into the record herein. That exhibit points out, inter alia, that the definition of the term "predatory practices" as used in federal proceedings involving alleged violations of the Robinson-Patman Act is accepted by the Commission in connection with the presentation of evidence in compliance with Ordering Paragraph 6 of Decision No. 86084, and that the term "predatory practices" as generally used in such federal cases refers to price-cutting to a below-cost level with the intent of driving out or substantially injuring competing firms. CTA and CMSA contend that the key word in that definition is intent. They urge that the Commission, by adopting the above definition, has indicated that it will not entertain petitions to raise minimum rates unless it can be demonstrated by petitioner that present minimum rates have resulted in intentional, below-cost pricing in order to injure competition. The carrier associations contend that such approach presents petitioners with impossible burdens of proof, inasmuch as petitioners do not have the requisite knowledge of intent nor the authority of law to obtain that knowledge. Assertedly, the failure of petitioners to meet that burden of proof could then be used as a basis for denying relief.

Interim Decisions Nos. 86084 and 86698 made no increases in the hourly rates applicable within Los Angeles County because of the opposition of carriers domiciled within that area who testified that the existing levels of rates were profitable and would continue to be profitable in the near future. CMSA called as its witness one of the carriers who had appeared in the prior phase of this proceeding in opposition to increases in hourly rates. That carrier has six employees and performs 90 percent of his transportation services

-7-

under hourly rates between points within a 25-mile radius of Arleta (Los Angeles County). The witness testified that he is now in favor of the rate increase proposed by CMSA because of the operating cost increases experienced by him since the prior hearing. The witness explained that although he does not employ union labor, he has increased the wages paid to his employees in the same percentage amount as that required under union contracts. In addition, he has experienced substantial increases for repair parts have risen by 60 to 70 percent. The witness explained that he did not anticipate that his operating costs would rise in the amounts incurred since the hearings in the interim phase of this proceeding. The witness testified that the existing minimum rates are now far too low to permit him to operate at a profit; therefore, he supports a rate increase.

Two other carriers who appeared in the prior phase of this proceeding in opposition to any increase in Territory C hourly rates expressed no opposition to CMSA's current proposals. <u>Staff Position</u>

The staff representative stated that the Transportation Division had not completed the staff studies described in Ordering Paragraphs 4 and 5 of Decision No. 86084 (see page 3 herein) because of certain internal manpower shifts. The staff representative recommended that the studies directed in Decision No. 86084 be deferred for presentation in the OSH proceeding in Case No. 5330 which will be issued to receive evidence on the new regulatory program outlined in Decision No. 87047, supra.

The staff representative stated that the staff had reviewed the work papers of CMSA which underlie CMSA's exhibits presented in this phase of Petition 95 and the staff is satisfied with the development of costs, except that the staff recommends that the direct wage offset method should be adopted, inasmuch as that method was used in the two prior interim orders herein and because such method results in lower rate levels. Using such offset method the staff recommends as follows:

- "a. Continue the current surcharge supplement format for the distance rates in Items 300 and 320. However, effective on or about April 1, 1977, increase the eight and one-half (8½) percent to eleven and one-half (11½) percent and then effective July 1, 1977, increase the eleven and one-half (11½) percent to fourteen and one-half (14½) percent.
- "b. The rates in Items 330, 340, 350, and 360 should be increased as shown below with a further recommendation with respect to Territory 'C'. If petitioner has made sufficient showing to satisfy the Commission's request as stated in Decision No. 86698 ('...hourly rates in that portion of Territory C in which protesting carriers are operating should not be subject to an interim increase pending further consideration of the full-scale studies and other evidence to be adduced in the subsequent phases of this proceeding.") then it is recommended that the division in Territory 'C' be deleted and the higher of the two proposed rates be authorized on or about April 1, 1977."

-9-

<u>Item 330 - Hourly Rates</u>													
	Territory A				ritory		the second s	ferritor	ry C Propose	d			
	Pres.	Prop		Pres.	Proposed		Pres.						
Unit of Equipment a. With Driver	1,980	(1) 2,120	(2) 2,230	1,685	(1) 1,775	(2) 1,835	(3) 1,675	(4) 1,825	(3)(1) 1,775	(4)(1) 1,925			
b. With Driver and One Helper	3,630	3,900	4,140	2,925	3,070	3,190	2,930	3,195	3,110	3,375			
Additional Helpers, Per Man	1,265	1,410	1,525	835	895	920	840	905	950	1,010			
Item 340 - Distance Rate	s in Cen	ts Per P	iece										
	First Pi	ece Mile:	s			Bach /	ldditional	l Piece					
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	Pres.	Propose			oposed								
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<u>Item 350 - Accessorial R</u>	lates					•							
-		tory A		Territo		ı		tory C					
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Packing/Unpacking 1	,610	(1) 1,750 1	(2) ,860 1,		1) (2 415 1,4		) (4) 55 1,480	(3)(1 1,45)					
Item 360 - Picking Up or	Deliver	y of Shi	pping Co	ntainers,	Etc.								
					Pres.	Propos							
Bach Container, Set Up	<b>`</b>			(1) $(2)235 240 250$									
Each Bundle of Contain		ded Flat		235 240 250									
Minimum Charge Per Del	Livery			1,115 1,150 1,185									
(1) Effective on or about April 1, 1977. (3) Applies only in Los Angeles County.													

(2) Effective July 1, 1977.

(4) Does not apply in Los Angeles County.

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101

The staff concurs in petitioner's proposal that this order should be final and that all remaining issues should be considered in future proceedings involving new regulatory procedures. <u>Discussion</u>

In accordance with our policies outlined in Decision No. 87047 and adopted in Decision No. 87048, we will grant the increases in the minimum rates in MRT 4-B sufficient to reflect, as nearly as it is possible to determine on this record, the current operating costs of household goods carriers. The rate increases should be based on the direct wage offset method as proposed by the staff, inasmuch as such method results in lesser increases than those proposed by petitioner, and because such offset method was found reasonable in the initial phases of this proceeding.

It is clear that present rates applicable in Los Angeles County are below the current operating costs experienced by carriers located in that county, and that such rates are not profitable. The Los Angeles County hourly rates should be increased to the same levels as the hourly rates applicable within other portions of Territory C.

The rate increases authorized herein should be granted on a two-step basis, as some of the cost increases are already in effect, while the balance will not become effective until July 1. The rates established to become effective on July 1, 1977 should be reasonable and sufficient for a full-year period, during which we will conduct our investigation into the proposed new regulatory procedures leading to carrier-established rates for household goods carriers.

In the circumstances the order herein should be final and all undecided issues raised in this proceeding should be deferred to the proceeding in which we will consider the new regulatory program. Deferred to that proceeding are issues related to the directive in Ordering Paragraph 6 of Decision No. 86084 concerning

-11-

predatory practices, and the staff studies directed in Ordering Paragraphs 4 and 5 of that decision. We must comment, however, that we do not believe the showing made with respect to predatory practices is adequate or sufficient, and that showing does not satisfy our directive in Ordering Paragraph 6 of Decision No. 86084 <u>Findings</u>

1. The existing rate levels for distance rates in cents per 100 pounds set forth in Items 300 and 320 of MRT 4-B were established by Decision No. 86084, effective August 15, 1976; the current hourly rates for Territories A and B and in that portion of Territory C excluding Los Angeles County together with related accessorial labor charges were established by Decision No. 86698, effective January 1, 1977; and the level of hourly rates within Los Angeles County was established by Decision No. 84256 effective April 19, 1975.

2. Household goods carriers operating under the minimum rates set forth in MRT 4-B have experienced increases in operating costs on April 1, 1977 (or before) in almost all categories of expenses, and will experience further increased labor and fringe benefit costs on July 1, 1977. Those increases are not totally reflected in the current levels of minimum rates in MRT 4-B.

3. CMSA seeks increases in rates as described in the preceding opinion.

4. The procedure used by CMSA to arrive at its recommendations represents the method resulting in the largest increase of the several methods we have recognized in the past for measuring cost increases.

5. The Commission staff recommends a much lower adjustment than that recommended by CMSA; we shall adopt the staff recommendation.

-12-

6. We are not sympathetic to offset procedures as we have stated in several recent decisions in these cases; however, we cannot fail to recognize that household goods carriers are faced with increased costs of doing business. Accordingly and reluctantly, we will adjust the minimum rates pending the possible adoption and implementation of a plan for reregulation of the trucking industry.

7. The rates and charges established by the ensuing order are just, reasonable, and nondiscriminatory minimum rates for the transportation governed thereby.

8. It is estimated that the rates found reasonable above will result in the following average increases:

<u>Distance Rates</u>: 6.0 percent <u>Hourly Rates</u> - Territory A: 12.7 percent Territory B: 8.7 percent <u>Territory C: 6.5 percent</u> Average: 7.1 percent

The above rate increases are estimated to produce an annual revenue increase of \$8,100,000.

9. To the extent that the provisions of MRT 4-B heretofore have been found to constitute reasonable minimum rates and rules for common carriers as defined in the Public Utilities Code, said provisions, as hereinafter adjusted, are, and will be, reasonable minimum rate provisions for said common carriers. To the extent that the existing rates and charges of said common carriers for the transportation involved are less in volume or effect than the minimum rates and charges designated herein as reasonable for said carriers, to that same extent the rates and charges of said carriers are, and for the future will be, unreasonable, insufficient, and not justified by the actual competitive rates of competing carriers or by the cost of other means of transportation.

-13-

## Conclusions

1. Petition 95 in Case No. 5330 should be granted to the extent provided by the order herein.

2. The evidence directed to be presented pursuant to Ordering Paragraphs 4, 5, and 6 of Decision No. 86084 should be deferred to a subsequent proceeding in which evidence will be adduced with respect to the Commission's new regulatory program.

### FINAL ORDER

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. Minimum Rate Tariff 4-B (Appendix C of Decision No. 65521, as amended) is further amended by incorporating therein, to become effective May 14, 1977, Supplement 34, Twenty-eighth Revised Page 28, and Twenty-seventh Revised Page 29, attached hereto and by this reference made a part hereof.

2. Common carriers subject to the Public Utilities Act, to the extent that they are subject also to Decision No. 65521, as amended, are directed to establish in their tariffs the increases necessary to conform with the further adjustments ordered by this decision.

3. Tariff publication required to be made by common carriers as a result of the order herein shall be filed not earlier than the effective date of this order and shall become effective May 14, 1977 on not less than five days' notice to the Commission and to the public.

-14-

4. In all other respects, Decision No. 65521, as amended, shall remain in full force and effect.

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

Dated at \_\_\_\_\_\_, California, this \_\_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_\_, 1977.

I concur in the findings, conclusion and ordering pargraphs Jquovo. ham, Commissioner

President ommissioners

De ABotta

Commissioner

#### SUPPLEMENT 34

(Cancels Supplement 33)

(Supplements 31, 32 and 34 Contain all Changes)

70

MINIMUM RATE TARIFF 4-B

NAMING

MINIMUM RATES AND RULES

#### FOR THE

TRANSPORTATION OF USED PROPERTY, VIZ.:

HOUSEHOLD GOODS, PERSONAL EFFECTS AND

OFFICE, STORE AND INSTITUTION FURNITURE,

FIXTURES AND EQUIPMENT OVER THE

PUBLIC HIGHWAYS WITHIN THE

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

) BY

RADIAL HIGHWAY COMMON CARRIERS

HIGHWAY CONTRACT CARRIERS

AND

HOUSEHOLD GOODS CARRIERS

APPLICATION OF SURCHARGES

(See Page 2 of This Supplement)

87250

Decision No.

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EFFECTIVE

Issued by the FUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA State Building, Civic Center San Francisco, California 94102

#### ♦ APPLICATION OF SURCHARGES

Except as otherwise provided, compute the amount of charges in Items 300 and 320 in accordance with the rates and rules in this tariff and increase the amount so computed by:

- Eleven and one-half (115) percent, expiring with June 30, 1977.
- (2) Fourteen and one-half (145) percent, effective July 1, 1977.

The surcharge authorized herein shall be computed to the nearest five (5) cents. In computing the surcharge, two and onehalf cents (25) and seven and one-half (75) cents shall be considered as being nearer to the next five cents.

THE END

• Increase, Decision No.

87250

-2-

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MINIMUM RATE TARIFF 4-B

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