

Decision No. 90994 NOV 6 1979

ORIGINAL

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

In the Matter of the Application of)
CENTRAL SIERRA ELDERLY ASSISTANCE, INC.,)
a California Corporation, for certificate)
of public convenience and necessity to)
operate passengers and their baggage)
between points in Calaveras county.)
Connections will be made to other)
counties.)

Application No. 58524
(Filed December 13, 1978)

Michael E. Gill, Attorney at Law, for applicant.
G. L. Freed and Doris Freed, for themselves, protestants.
R. E. Douglas, for the Commission staff.

O P I N I O N

By this application Central Sierra Elderly Assistance, Inc. (applicant), a nonprofit California corporation, seeks a certificate of public convenience and necessity to operate as a passenger stage corporation over regular routes in the counties of Calaveras, Amador, and Tuolumne, as defined in Section 226 of the Public Utilities Code.

The application is protested by the Calaveras Transit Company (Calaveras). Also in opposition are the Calaveras County Chamber of Commerce and the City of Angels. The City of Jackson supports the application, after first opposing it on the basis that the Amador County Rapid Transit is currently providing adequate transportation service.

Hearing was held April 2, 1979 in San Francisco before Administrative Law Judge Banks, at which time the matter was submitted.

The application avers that applicant is a nonprofit corporation organized in 1975 whose specific and primary purposes are to "operate an organization for charitable purposes, to advance the economic and social well-being of persons 60 years of age and over by developing, conducting, and administering programs as established under provisions of The Older Americans Act of 1965, as amended, as well as other programs consistent with the organization aims, to encourage, stimulate, and assist in the development of persons 60 years of age and over, by public agencies, nonprofit voluntary organizations, and indigenous groups working in employment, health, housing, nutrition, transportation, and recreation."

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Three members of the public testified in support of the application. All three are residents of Calaveras County who stated that the proposed service is needed because the service now provided in the county is inadequate. They indicated that they would use applicant's service if the certificate were granted. The applicant and protestants stipulated that the other members of the public attending the hearing, some 30 persons, would also testify as to the need for the service and their intent to use the service if the application were granted. A petition with 129 signatures in support of the application was also introduced, the result of two weeks of circulation.

Applicant's Evidence

Testifying on behalf of applicant was its project director, Ms. Hope Henry Hill; and its transportation coordinator, Ms. Shirley L. Holbery.

Ms. Hill testified that her duties are to oversee the applicant's operation in its quest to provide nutrition for the elderly in the five counties of Calaveras, Amador, Alpine, Tuolumne, and Mariposa, together with supportive social services which include transportation, recreation, information referral, outreach, escort service, and health and welfare counseling. She stated that applicant currently operates six nutrition sites in five different counties, two of which are in Calaveras County. Meals for the elderly are provided at five of these sites each day.

She stated that applicant is presently funded by a grant from Title VII of The Older Americans Act (Title VII) for its nutrition program, which includes some transportation, but that because present funding prevented them from providing the necessary transportation, applicant began to "look for sources of funding and found

SB 283."^{1/} She stated that because it appeared SB 283 would provide funds for both capital equipment and operating expenses, applicant contacted Cal Trans and made application.

To support her contention of the area's need for additional transportation, Ms. Hill introduced Exhibit 2, a booklet entitled "Elderly in a Rural Mountain Area."^{2/} She stated that the study concludes that the four-county area -- Alpine, Amador, Calaveras, and Tuolumne -- is unlike the more settled metropolitan and suburban centers, where transportation is good, and that the problems of the elderly are compounded by distances and lack of transportation.

On cross-examination, Ms. Hill admitted that the financial statement figures contained in the application were only estimates. She could only estimate since the applicant has not previously operated this type of service. Estimated expenses of the operation were determined from applicant's experience in operating its Title VII buses.^{3/}

1/ SB 283, enacted 1975, added Chapter 13 to Division 3 of the Streets and Highways Code relating to transportation. The pertinent portion relied on by applicant provides as follows:

"Section 6(a) For the 1976-77 to 1978-79 fiscal years, inclusive, the Secretary of the Business and Transportation Agency shall allocate funds for rural public transportation projects, which shall include, but not be limited to, dial-a-ride services and other paratransit systems capable of offering flexible scheduling and routing, or both, and capable of being operational within six months of project approval.

"(b) The projects shall be selected so as to enable the state to assist governmental agencies and nonprofit corporations in providing new and improved rural transit services to develop, test, and evaluate new and improved transit delivery systems which meet the mobility needs of persons in rural areas in the most cost-effective manner, and to maximize federal and state funds available for rural transportation projects regardless of funding source.

"(c) At least one project shall be conducted which studies and demonstrates the feasibility of developing a single coordinated transportation delivery system for the elderly, handicapped, and low-income individuals who are participants in federal, state, or locally funded social service programs in a single jurisdiction."

2/ The booklet was prepared in 1975 by Area 12, Elderly Assistance Planning Project, California Commission on Aging.

3/ The project budget, appended to the application, shows projected revenues of \$9,510 from fares, a grant of \$3,575 from National Council of Senior Citizens and \$100,000 from SB 283 funds. Expenses were projected to be \$70,685. These expenses do not include \$42,400 in capital expenditures or any allowance for depreciation expense.

She acknowledged that the operation, as proposed, was not financially viable and would require an annual subsidy of between \$50,000 - \$60,000. She indicated that maintenance and repairs are to be performed by the State Sierra Conservation Center at minimal cost to applicant.

Ms. Holbery, transportation coordinator for the applicant, testified that she is in charge of all aspects of transportation needs. If the application is granted, CSEA would operate three 15-passenger buses with six drivers working approximately 20 hours per week. Applicant will go off-highway to pickup low mobility passengers, including elderly. Each of three buses will run a different route on a different days, i.e., Monday and Thursday, Tuesday and Friday, and Wednesday. Service is projected for areas not presently covered, including: Copperopolis, Mountain Ranch, and Sheep Ranch by the West Point bus; Columbia Junior College, Railroad Flat and Glencoe, down Murphys Grade Road by the Arnold bus. They will all pickup senior citizens. On cross-examination, Ms. Holbery explained that it was not possible to schedule around the protestant Calaveras' schedule because applicant's drivers are social security recipients who cannot work more than eight hours per day. Because the buses would be taking people to and from the nutrition sites, she believes that overall transportation service in the county would be improved.

According to Ms. Holbery, the applicant has held several meetings with protestant, Mr. Freed, in an attempt to work out an amiable solution to the problem of duplicating existing service. However, nothing has been resolved since Mr. Freed insisted that the applicant either not run buses on his authorized routes or that he receive a subsidy from applicant to provide the service.

Mr. Sanchez of Caltrans was called as a witness by the applicant. He stated that he was familiar with the available transportation in Calaveras County and had a rough idea of the county's needs. In assessing the county's transportation needs, he takes into consideration both the type of county and its population, including percentages of elderly, low income, and handicapped persons. He

agreed that his agency's funding reflected some "belief on the part of Caltrans that there is a need or that there are needs now that are not being met by the transportation system."

Upon cross-examination, he stated that the viability of an operation of the type proposed herein depends on the effectiveness of that organization and its supporters' lobbying efforts, including ability to convince the administrators of available funds of the reasonableness of their need. It requires convincing the decision-makers to direct some of these available funds toward transit operations. Finally, he stated that, "common sense is that we should always try to work with our existing operators." He has always been eager to bring together the two parties concerned here today.

Mr. Sanchez stated that SB 283 was enacted in 1975 to provide demonstration moneys to public agencies - private non-profit corporations - in order to provide new or improved transit delivery systems in rural areas. This was a one-time only grant.

Mr. Sanchez also indicated that there are presently two sources of funds available to groups like the applicant for operating a bus system of the type proposed. First, \$3.2 million in federal funds are presently available to the State of California for which Caltrans is formulating rules and regulations to govern its distribution to counties. While he was unable to give specific details, he estimated that, based on a \$3.2 million spread between California's 58 counties, a county the size of Calaveras would only be eligible to receive between \$10,000 and \$15,000. A second source of funds available to applicant is from the local transportation fund. This fund is money collected by the State Board of Equalization through the retail sales tax which is then distributed pro rata to the counties. Mr. Sanchez stated that for 1977-78, Calaveras County received approximately \$123,000 from the local transportation fund and that it is his understanding that it was all spent on roads and streets within the county. Additional funds from SB 283 are no longer available.

Upon cross-examination, Mr. Sanchez explained that the local transportation fund is administered by the original county transportation agency, i.e., the Calaveras County Transportation Commission (CCTC). In counties with a population of less than 500,000, local transportation funds can be used for roads and streets provided that the original transportation agency makes a finding that there are "no reasonable unmet county transit needs." He also stated that the county transportation agency responsible could prorate the transportation funds between roads and public transportation.

Protestant's Evidence

Mr. George Freed, owner of Calaveras Transit Company, appeared as protestant. Gwen Singh, manager of the Amador Rapid Transit, also testified in opposition to this application. A letter (Exhibit 5) from the City of Angels was introduced into evidence. Its City Council wished to go on record opposing the application since the proposed routes are: (1) in direct competition to the already existing bus service in Calaveras County, and, (2) they are not needed by the senior citizens because a free bus service already exists in Calaveras County.

Calaveras Transit has been operating under Mr. Freed since 1960. It operates two 15-passenger buses with one full-time employee and one part-time employee. Mr. Freed stated that he was opposed to the application because it is unfair for a government-funded transportation system, such as proposed here, to be in competition with private enterprise, that there had been too little effort to coordinate applicant's proposal with existing transportation, and that SB 283 grants were not intended to provide competition to private enterprise. Mr. Freed also stated that he was not opposed to applicant taking senior citizens to nutrition sites, but that the routes proposed in the application duplicate those of Calaveras. In addition, he stated that applicant would be able to coordinate the proposed routes with its charter-party certificate and, thereby, make runs to Stockton in direct competition with Calaveras.

In his closing argument, Mr. Freed stated that on two different occasions he expanded his service at the request of local patrons to include points in Calaveras County not being served. In each instance, he had to cancel service for lack of patronage.

Ms. Singh stated that the Amador Rapid Transit Commission (ARPC) had been operating for approximately two and a half years running three buses throughout Amador County and that local county service is supplemented with Amador Stage Lines for service to Sacramento, Stockton, and Reno. She stated that applicant presently has several buses, that it is ARPC's view that when applicant's funding runs out it will come to ARPC seeking funds but that the local transportation fund, currently available to ARPC, should be used for Amador County's transportation rather than have a new competing system. Further, she stated that it is Amador County's position that with the expenditure cutbacks dictated by Proposition 13, applicant should cut back its operation as much as possible, instead of "having buses just run all over the place, just to make sure they meet the needs and not send empty buses for one purpose or another."

Ms. Nancy Marie Whittle, a member of the Board of Supervisors of Calaveras County and chairman of the county's local transportation commission, indicated that she was not appearing as a witness for either applicant or protestant. She wished only to reflect the position of the Board of Supervisors. She stated that,

"The Board of Supervisors' position on this matter is that we--if there is to be any transit systems in the county, we want them coordinating with what is there existing now.

"We know financially that the Board of Supervisors or Calaveras County cannot pay for a transit system.

"We don't want a private system run out of business because we don't want to be stuck for providing that service. We have needs other than people transportation.

"Our small stores, from drugs to auto parts, use this transit system, so we urge that any transit system that comes in coordinate with that system.

"That's the position of the Board of Supervisors, and the local transportation commission."

Discussion

Evidence submitted by the Caltrans witness, Mr. Raul Sanchez, as well as Ms. Hope Hill and Ms. S. Holbery of CSEA, reflects the need for additional transit in the area.

The need for additional service, documented in the study entitled "Elderly in a Rural Mountain Area," is further substantiated by public comment and a petition with approximately 129 signatures.

While the lack of a viable financing program and the need for considerable subsidy pose some concern for this Commission, it is apparent that CSEA as a nonprofit corporation is a dedicated group of people who may be able to meet the need for additional transit in the area in the near term at a minimum level of subsidy. Applicant proposes to serve low mobility passengers by providing some limited off-highway service, as well as extending service in the area to places not currently served.

At the present time, Mr. Freed of Calaveras Transit (protestant) is not providing the service offered by applicant and he has undertaken no apparent steps to provide the service in the future. Although some of the proposed CSEA routes parallel Calaveras' routes, there should be little direct competition. Scheduling differences will minimize the potential for duplication of service and will reduce direct competition. Since CSEA does not propose to carry package express, this source of revenue will be left entirely to Calaveras. Moreover, Calaveras' principal revenue-generating route is to Stockton; CSEA does not propose serving this route.

CSEA is willing to assume the risk of providing transportation in spite of formidable financing problems, but this may be the only opportunity to meet this need at the present time. Granting this application, despite uncertainty as to their financial viability, provides them with the opportunity

to improve transit service to this group, as well as other low mobility persons in the area. Moreover, CSEA's success with volunteer energy may enable them to provide needed service at minimum cost by enlisting the aid of recipients of the service in the area.

Findings

1. Applicant requests a certificate of public convenience and necessity to operate three 15-passenger buses, on nine different routes, over regular routes in the counties of Calaveras, Amador, and Tuolumne.

2. Applicant is a nonprofit corporation organized in 1975 for charitable purposes. As such it oversees the nutrition and supportive social services provided to the elderly in the counties of Calaveras, Mariposa, Tuolumne, Alpine, and Amador. Supportive social services include transportation, recreation, information, referral, outreach, escort service, and health and welfare counseling.

3. Testimony introduced in this proceeding, including a 1973 study entitled "Elderly in a Rural Mountain Area, documents the need for additional transit in this area. (According to testimony in this proceeding, service in the area has not changed substantially since this study.)

4. Calaveras protests the granting of applicant's sought authority on the basis that attempts to coordinate the proposed routes with his operation have been inadequate, and that the proposed routes duplicate his.

5. Applicant is relying on federal and state grants to provide funds for both capital expenditures and operation expenses.

6. Applicant is presently funded by a federal grant from Title VII, as amended, with supplemental grants from Cal Trans.

7. Cal Trans is presently formulating rules and regulations to govern the distribution of approximately \$3.2 million of federal funds available to the State of California. It is estimated that a county the size of Calaveras would be eligible to receive a maximum of between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

8. An annual subsidy of between \$50,000-\$60,000 would be required to enable applicant to provide proposed service.

9. Applicant is eligible for subsidies from the local transportation fund, which is administered by the Calaveras County Transportation Commission.

10. Additional funds from SB283 are no longer available.

11. Applicant proposes a unique service intended for the elderly and low mobility persons, but also available to the general public.

12. Protestants are not providing the service proposed by the applicant.

13. Public support of this application has indicated the need for additional transportation in this area.

14. Applicant has indicated its willingness to abide by required rules and regulations and assume the necessary financial risk in the operation of a passenger bus service directed at the elderly and low mobility persons, but also available to the general public.

15. Applicant appears to be the only party willing and able to meet the need for additional transportation in this area at the present time.

16. Public convenience and necessity require that the service proposed by applicant be established.

The Commission concludes that the application should be granted.

Central Sierra Elderly Assistance, Inc. is placed on notice that operative rights, as such, do not constitute a class of property which may be capitalized or used as an element of value in rate fixing for any amount of money in excess of that originally paid to the State as the consideration for grant of such rights. Aside from their purely permissive aspect, such rights extend to the holder a full or partial monopoly of a class of business. This monopoly

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feature may be modified or canceled at any time by the State, which is not in any respect limited as to the number of rights which may be given.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. A certificate of public convenience and necessity is granted to Central Sierra Elderly Assistance, a corporation, authorizing it to operate as a passenger stage corporation, as defined in Section 226 of the Public Utilities Code, between the points and over the routes set forth in Appendix A of this decision.

2. In providing service pursuant to the authority granted by this order, applicant shall comply with the following service regulations. Failure to do so may result in a cancellation of the authority.

- (a) Within thirty days after the effective date of this order, applicant shall file a written acceptance of the certificate granted. Applicant is placed on notice that if it accepts the certificate it will be required, among other things, to comply with the safety rules administered by the California Highway Patrol, the rules and other regulations of the Commission's General Order No. 98-Series, and the insurance requirements of the Commission's General Order No. 101-Series.
- (b) Within one hundred twenty days after the effective date of this order, applicant shall establish the authorized service and file tariffs and timetables, in triplicate, in the Commission's office.
- (c) The tariff and timetable filings shall be made effective not earlier than ten days after the effective date of this order on not less than ten days' notice to the Commission and the public, and the effective date of the tariff and timetable filings shall be concurrent with the establishment of the authorized service.
- (d) The tariff and timetable filings made pursuant to this order shall comply with the regulations governing the construction and filing of tariffs and timetables set forth in the Commission's General Orders Nos. 79-Series and 98-Series.

(e) Applicant shall maintain its accounting records on a calendar year basis in conformance with the applicable Uniform System of Accounts or Chart of Accounts as prescribed or adopted by this Commission and shall file with the Commission, on or before March 31 of each year, an annual report of its operations in such form, content, and number of copies as the Commission, from time to time, shall prescribe.

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

Dated NOV 6 1979, at San Francisco, California.

I dissent
Vernon L. Sturgeon

John E. Guyon
President
Robert W. Howell
Philip J. ...
Samuel M. ...
Commissioners

CERTIFICATE

OF

PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY

NO. 1094

TO OPERATE AS

A PASSENGER STAGE CORPORATION

Showing passenger stage operative rights, restrictions, limitations,
exceptions, and privileges applicable thereto.

All changes and amendments as authorized by
the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California
will be made as revised pages or added original pages.

Issued under authority of Decision No. 90384
dated NOV 6 1979 of the Public Utilities Commission
of the State of California, in Application No. 58524.

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Issued by California Public Utilities Commission.

Decision No. 90994, Application No. 58524.

SECTION 1. GENERAL AUTHORIZATIONS, RESTRICTIONS, LIMITATIONS,
AND SPECIFICATIONS.

CENTRAL SIERRA ELDERLY ASSISTANCE, INC. by the certificate of public convenience and necessity granted by the decision noted in the margin, is authorized to transport passengers between points in Calaveras, Tuolumne and Amador Counties over and along the routes hereinafter described and certain territories intermediate and adjacent thereto, subject, however, to the authority of this Commission to change or modify said routes at any time and subject to the following provisions:

- (a) Motor vehicles may be turned at termini and intermediate points, in either direction, at intersections of streets or by operating around a block contiguous to such intersections, in accordance with local traffic regulations.
- (b) When route descriptions are given in one direction, they apply to operation in either direction unless otherwise indicated.
- (c) The transportation of baggage shall be limited to personal property of the passengers and shall remain in their possession and control.
- (d) Transportation of passengers and their luggage shall be in passenger vehicles with a carrying capacity of not to exceed fifteen passengers and their luggages.

Issued by California Public Utilities Commission.

Decision No. 90554, Application No. 58524.

SECTION 1 (CONTINUED)

- (e) Carrier may depart from the described routes onto private roads for the purpose of pick-up or discharge of passengers for a distance not to exceed one mile by advance reservation only.
- (f) Operations over State Highway 4, State Highway 49, State Highway 12 or State Highway 26 shall not be operated in the same direction within one hour of the scheduled operations of Calaveras Transit Co. as of the effective date of this decision.
- (g) Except as separately authorized, two or more routes or portions of separate routes shall not be consolidated or operated in combination with one another.

Issued by California Public Utilities Commission.

Decision No. 90994, Application No. 58524.

SECTION 2 ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS.

Route No. 1 Arnold - Monday and Thursday

Commencing at the Post Office at Arnold; thence via State Highway 4 through Arnold, Avery, via Hathaway Pines, Murphys, and Douglas Flat, to Vallecito; thence via Parrotts Ferry road through Columbia to State Highway 49; thence via State Highway 49 to Sonora; thence via State Highway 49 to Angels Camp (City of Angels); thence via State Highway 4 to Arnold.

Route No. 2 Arnold - Tuesday and Friday

Commencing at the Post Office at Arnold; thence via State Highway 4 through Avery, Hathaway Pines, Murphys, Douglas Flat, and Vallecito to Angels Camp (City of Angels); thence via State Highway 49 through Altaville to San Andreas; thence via Mountain Ranch Road to Mountain Ranch; thence via Sheep Ranch Road to Sheep Ranch.

Route No. 3 Arnold - Wednesday

Commencing at the Post Office at Arnold; thence via State Highway 4 through Big Trees Village to Dorrington; thence via State Highway 4 to Moran Road; thence via Moran Road through Pinebrook to Avery; thence via State Highway 4 to Murphys thence via Main Street to Murphys Grade Road; thence via Murphy s Grade Road to Altaville; thence via State Highway 4 to Copperopolis.

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Decision No. 90994, Application No. 58524.

SECTION 2 ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS. (CONTINUED)

Route No. 4 Valley Springs - Monday and Wednesday

Commencing at the Post Office in Valley Springs on State Highway 12; thence via State Highway 12 to State Highway 49; thence via State Highway 49 through San Andreas and Altaville to Angels Camp (City of Angels).

Route variation: Route may deviate from State Highway 49 in San Andreas via Mountain Ranch Road to the Calaveras County Government Center and return.

Route No. 5 Valley Springs - Tuesday and Friday

Commencing at the Post Office in Valley Springs; thence via State Highway 12 through Burson to Wallace; thence via State Highway 12 through Burson to Valley Springs; thence via State Highway 26 to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 49 to Jackson; thence via State Highway 49 to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 26 to Valley Springs.

Route No. 6 Valley Springs - Thursday

Commencing at the Post Office in Valley Springs on State Highway 12; thence via State Highway 12 to Burson; thence via Burson Road to Milton Road; thence via Milton Road to Jenny Lind; thence via Jenny Lind Approach Road to State Highway 26; thence via State Highway 26 to Valley Springs; thence via State Highway 26 to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 49 to Jackson; thence via State Highway 49 to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 26 to Valley Springs.

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SECTION 2 ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS. (CONTINUED)

Route No. 7 West Point - Monday and Friday

Commencing at the Post Office at West Point, via State Highway 26 to Glencoe; thence via Ridge Road to Railroad Flat; thence via Railroad Flat Road to Mountain Ranch Road; thence via Mountain Ranch Road to State Highway 49; thence via State Highway 49 to San Andreas; thence via State Highway 49 to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 49 to Jackson.

Route No. 8 West Point - Tuesday and Thursday

Commencing at the Post Office at West Point via State Highway 26 through Glencoe, to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 49 to San Andreas Post Office; thence via State Highway 49 to Mountain Ranch Road and Calaveritas Road to Calaveritas; thence via Fricot City Road to State Highway 49; thence via State Highway 49 through Altaville to the junction of State Highway 49 and State Highway 4 in Angels Camp (City of Angels).

Route Variation: Route may deviate from State Highway 49 in San Andreas via Mountain Ranch Road to the Calaveras County Government Center and return.

Route No. 9 West Point - Wednesday

Commencing at the Post Office at West Point, via State Highway 26 to Glencoe; thence via Ridge Road to Railroad Flat; thence return via Ridge Road to Glencoe; thence via State Highway 26 to Mokelumne Hill; thence via State Highway 49

Issued by California Public Utilities Commission.

Decision No. 90994, Application No. 58524.

SECTION 2 ROUTE DESCRIPTIONS. (CONTINUED)

to San Andreas; thence via State Highway 49 through Altaville to the junction of State Highway 49 and State Highway 4 in Angels Camp (City of Angels); thence via State Highway 4 to Murphys; thence via Murphys Grade Road to State Highway 49; thence via State Highway 49 to the Post Office at Angels Camp (City of Angels).

Route Variation: Route may deviate from State Highway 49 in San Andreas via Mountain Ranch Road to the Calaveras County Government Center and return.

(END OF APPENDIX A)

Issued by California Public Utilities Commission.

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