

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Safety and Enforcement Division
Railroad Safety Branch

RESOLUTION SR-81
January 24, 1996
Page 1 of 3

R E S O L U T I O N

GRANTING AN EXEMPTION FROM SIDE CLEARANCE REQUIREMENTS OF GENERAL ORDER 26-D FOR THE SAN DIEGO AND IMPERIAL VALLEY RAILROAD FREIGHT TRACK LOCATED BETWEEN MILEPOSTS 17.66 AND 17.76 IN THE CITY OF EL CAJON, SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA.

General Order 26-D, in Sections 3.2 and 3.16, prescribes a minimum side clearance of 9 feet 6 inches adjacent to curved track for railroads transporting freight cars. By letter dated September 14, 1995, the San Diego Metropolitan Transit Development Board (MTDB) seeks an exemption from these requirements, pursuant to Section 16.2 of General Order 26-D, for the freight track located between mileposts 17.66 and 17.76 in the City of El Cajon, San Diego County. There is a 19 degree curve at the location.

MTDB justifies the request because the freight tracks are constrained by other physical requirements in the same area: fire access lane and underground fire service appurtenances, conformance with the Americans with Disabilities Act sidewalk access requirements, traffic signal pole and signal head conformance with the City of El Cajon and CALTRANS requirements, and conflicts with existing underground utilities. MTDB maintains that it cannot modify the track placement without creating conflicts with these critical elements.

Specifically, the traffic signal pole and signal heads located on the east side of the track, at the southeast corner of the intersection of Fletcher Parkway and Marshall Avenue, are impaired, measuring 7 feet 8 inches to the hoodcap of the signal light and 9 feet 2 inches to the signal pole, from the center line of the curved track. Underground utilities restrict the pole foundation placement. Modification of the track placement at this location would create further conflicts with the westerly traffic signal pole, railroad cantilever, storm drain, and retaining wall located opposite the track and is, therefore, not feasible.

The ladder portion of the railroad cantilever signal assembly at 9 feet 2 inches from the centerline of the track is also at impaired clearance. According to the request, moving the cantilever and/or tracks would create further conflicts with the storm drain box, sidewalk access, and traffic signal poles.

Portions of the concrete retaining wall are also in conflict with the clearance provisions of General Order 26-D, measuring 8 feet 0 inches to 8 feet 5 inches from the track's centerline for 11 feet on the west end. Measurements are approximately 8 feet 5 inches for 16 feet on the east end of the wall. Here the track was placed to avoid impacts to existing underground fire service lines and sewer main and to provide access for repairs to underground utilities in the event of an emergency. The retaining wall placement was set to provide pedestrian separation from the track and provide a truck turning area for a fire access lane required by the local fire department.

Presently, San Diego and Imperial Valley Railroad (SDIV) operates standard-width cars on the average of three times a week between 1:00 A.M. and 3:30 A.M. to serve three industries in the area. Current operating rules and procedures prohibit riding on the sides of freight cars or locomotives. This policy is proposed for all future freight movement in this area. These clearance issues have been reviewed by the SDIV Operations Manager, who concurs that the present condition does not impair the movement of freight trains.

No trainmen's union currently represents SDIV employees, so copies have not been furnished to the labor organizations that often take a position on such requests. There appear to be no additional parties affected by the request.

The Commission, therefore, finds due to space limitations and limited operations at the location that the request should be granted.

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that:

San Diego Metropolitan Transit Board is granted an exemption from side clearance requirements of General Order 26-D, Sections 3.2 and 3.16, to operate freight trains between mileposts 17.66 and 17.76 in the City of El Cajon, San Diego County, subject to the following conditions:

1. Operating rules shall continue in effect to prohibit the riding on the sides of freight cars or locomotives.

2. San Diego and Imperial Valley Railroad shall issue appropriate clearance notices to all employees who may be affected by this impairment.

The effective date of this Resolution is today.

I hereby certify that this Resolution was adopted by the Public Utilities Commission at its regular meeting on January 24, 1996. The following Commissioners approved it:

Wesley Franklin

WESLEY M. FRANKLIN
Executive Director

P. GREGORY CONLON
JESSIE J. KNIGHT, JR.
HENRY M. DUQUE
JOSIAH L. NEPPER
Commissioners

Commissioner Daniel Wm. Fessler
is necessarily absent on official
business.