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PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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March 15, 2010

Gerald J. Fuccillo
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City of Sonora
94 N. Washington Street
Sonora, CA 95370

File No. G.10-02-001

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter Old Wards Ferry Road Highway–Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 039-46.0, DOT No. 861412N in the City of Sonora, Tuolumne County.

Dear Mr. Fuccillo:

This refers to your letter dated February 3, 2010, and received by us on February 4, 2010, requesting authorization pursuant to Commission General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter an at-grade highway-rail crossing of the Sierra Railroad Company (SERA) track in the City of Sonora (City), Tuolumne County. The crossing is identified as the Old Wards Ferry Road Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 039-46.0, DOT No. 861412N.

Old Wards Ferry Road is a two-lane local roadway in the City. Old Wards Ferry Road has no medians and one sidewalk on the east side of the roadway at the crossing. The Old Wards Ferry Road crossing has one track frequented by SERA trains. The crossing is equipped with two Commission Standard 9 (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate) warning devices.

The City states in its GO 88-B request letter that “The public will benefit from the proposed project through improvements to both public safety and convenience. Traffic congestion and associated vehicle queues across the track will be reduced through the addition of one lane in each direction thereby increasing the available northbound exiting storage from 2 vehicles with stop control to 10 vehicles with signalized control. The installation of medians is intended to reduce the possibility of motorists driving around the lowered warning device gate arms. The relocated crossing will have curb-mounted Commission Standard 9A warning devices (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm with additional lights on a cantilever over the road surface) to the right of each crossing approach, and Standard 9 gate arms in the raised center median, to the left of each approach. The installation of roadway intersection traffic signals and preemption will allow motorists to more efficiently clear the tracks as a train approaches.”

The proposed alterations, as indicated in the request letter and/or shown in the attachments, shall consist of:

- relocating the centerline of the existing Old Wards Ferry Road crossing approximately 170 feet westerly from the present location;
- widening Old Wards Ferry Road through the crossing;

- realigning Old Wards Ferry Road with Greenley Road to form a new intersection of Old Wards Ferry Road with Sanguinetti Road and Greenley Road, which will replace two existing STOP sign-controlled tee intersections;
- installing traffic signals with advanced preemption at the Old Wards Ferry Road/Sanguinetti Road/ Greenley Road intersection, and installing advanced preemption at the existing traffic signal system at the Mono Way/ Greenley Road intersection. Advanced preemption will require at least an additional 10 seconds of warning time for a total railroad warning time of at least 30 seconds. Advance preemption at both of the noted intersections will work in conjunction with each other to properly clear traffic from the relocated Old Wards Ferry Road crossing and the adjacent Sanguinetti Road crossing. Preemption of these crossings will be sequenced in accordance with the direction of travel of approaching trains;
- installing a raised concrete median on both sides of the crossing per plan;
- installing concrete panels for the railroad crossing surface;
- installing a Commission Standard 9-A warning device on the shoulder on both sides of the roadway, and a Commission Standard 9 warning device on the raised concrete median on both sides of the crossing;
- installing curbing in the vicinity of the shoulder-mounted warning devices as noted on the plan to provide necessary clearance requirements for the gate masts;
- installing sidewalks across the tracks on both sides of the roadway with ADA compliant detectable warning (tactile strips) surfaces on the sidewalks per plan;
- installing “KEEP CLEAR “ markings on the roadway for northbound traffic at the intersection of Old Wards Ferry Road and the shopping center entrance/exit just southerly of the crossing on the east side of the roadway;
- installing 3-way Stop sign control of the shopping center exits/Old Wards Ferry Road intersection just southerly of the crossing, leaving southbound traffic exiting the Old Wards Ferry Road crossing “free-running” (uncontrolled);
- installing R3-1 and R3-2 activated blank-out signs interconnected with the railroad track circuitry (which activate only upon the approach of a train) at the shopping center exits just southerly of the crossing instead of the flashing “No Right on Railroad Signal” and “No Left on Railroad Signal” signs, respectively, as noted in the GO 88-B request and on the plan. In conversations with Staff after submittal of the GO 88-B request, the City agreed to install the R3-1 and R3-2 activated blank-out signs, in accordance with the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD), Figure 8B-3(CA), instead of the other signs noted. The City will also annotate these changes on the plan for the crossing, adding the R3-1 and R3-2 activated blank-out signs, and removing references to the other signs;
- installing all striping, at-grade crossing pavement markings, and signage per plan, except the 1-D (pedestrian crossing) sign should not be installed, as this is an incorrect use of this sign (the 1-D sign should only be installed at a crossing that is solely a pedestrian crossing). The City should remove the references to the 1-D sign on the plan.

Staff has investigated the request by the City, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the City and SERA are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, you may proceed with the improvements as described in your request letter and attachments, and summarized above, as modified and adjusted herein.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with Section 8A.05, Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the CAMUTCD, published by Caltrans.

All parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission General Orders, and the CAMUTCD.

This project is categorically exempt from the requirements of the California Environment Quality Act of 1970, as amended [California Pubic Resources Code 21084].

This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within two years of the date of this letter. Upon written request to this office, the time to complete the project may be extended. A written request for a time extension must include concurrence letters by interested parties in support of the time extension. If an extension is requested, staff from the Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

Within 30 days after completion of this project, the City shall notify RCES that the authorized work is completed by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G titled *Report of Changes at Highway Grade Crossings and Separations*. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the CPUC web site Form G page at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/formg>. This report may be submitted electronically to rces@cpuc.ca.gov as outlined on the web page.

If you have any questions, please contact Marvin Kennix at (916) 324-7135 or email at mlk@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Daren Gilbert, Supervisor
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Consumer Protection and Safety Division

Cc:

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