

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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September 22, 2011

Alan Weaver
Director
Department of Public Works and Planning
County of Fresno
2220 Tulare Street
Fresno, CA 93721

File No. G.11-08-003

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter Elkhorn Avenue Highway–Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 002-980.00, DOT No. 028439D in the County of Fresno.

Dear Mr. Weaver:

This refers to your letter dated August 3, 2011, and received by us on August 8, 2011 requesting authorization pursuant to Commission General Order (GO) 88-B to alter an at-grade highway-rail crossing of the BNSF Railway (BNSF) track in the County of Fresno (County). The crossing is identified as Elkhorn Avenue Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 002-980.00, DOT No. 028439D.

Elkhorn Avenue, running east-west, is a rural, two-lane minor collector roadway at the crossing. The Elkhorn Avenue crossing has a single mainline track frequented by BNSF freight and Amtrak passenger trains. There are no medians or sidewalks at the crossing. The crossing is equipped with two Commission Standard 9-A (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm with additional flashing lights over the roadway on a cantilevered arm) warning devices.

This project is being done in conjunction with the Section 130 Program. The County states in its GO 88-B request letter that “The public will benefit from the proposed project through improvements to public safety. The crossing is prone to fog in winter and there have been accidents where motorists ran into warning device gates and the side of trains. Active advance warning will help to prevent such accidents by providing greater and clearer advance warning of trains to motorists, many of them who travel at great speeds, 50 mph plus, on this roadway.”

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

- Installing a train-activated active advance warning system on the east and west approaches that will consist of a pair of flashing yellow beacons located at each passive W10-1 advance warning sign placed approximately 500 feet from the centerline of the track on each approach per plan. A fail-safe battery back-up shall be included as part of the active advance warning system;
- Providing signal interconnection and junction boxes installed (by BNSF) near the existing warning devices for the operation of the active advance warning system on the east and west approaches.

Staff has investigated the request by the County and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the County and BNSF 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.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with Section 8A.05, Temporary Traffic Control Zones, of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (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 Public Resources Code 21084].

This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within three 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 County 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) 928-3809 or email at mlk@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Daren Gilbert, Manager
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Consumer Protection and Safety Division

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