

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

180 PROMENADE CIRCLE, SUITE 115  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95834



June 18, 2012

File Number: G.12-05-018

Patrick Coggins  
Senior Right of Way Agent  
California Department of Transportation  
111 Grand Avenue  
Oakland, CA 94612

**Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the California Department of Transportation US 101/SR 116 Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 005-37.50-A, DOT No. 863534A in the City of Petaluma, Sonoma County**

Dear Mr. Coggins:

This refers to your letter dated May 21, 2012 and received by us on May 23, 2012 requesting authorization pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B to modify the grade-separated highway-rail crossing of the Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) tracks in the City of Petaluma, Sonoma County. The crossing is identified as the US 101 / SR 116 Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 005-37.50-A, DOT No. 863534A.

This is a double track grade separated crossing over the SMART tracks in the City of Petaluma. Northwestern Pacific Railroad Company (NWP) runs approximately 6 freight trains per week at a maximum speed of 25 mph over the crossing.

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) states in its GO 88-B request letter that "The public will benefit from the improvements. The inside widening will accommodate the addition of a northbound HOV lane which will reduce congestion and increase safety. The outside widening will facilitate the installation of sound walls. These sound walls will provide freeway traffic noise attenuation for residents in the area."

During construction, Caltrans is requesting a temporary impaired vertical clearance of 20 feet 6 inches. Commission GO 26-D, Section 2.1, requires a minimum vertical clearance of 22 feet 6 inches. Caltrans requests a temporary deviation from the vertical clearance requirements of GO 26-D. The Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) of the Commission's Consumer Protection and Safety Division contacted SMART and the NWP regarding the temporary deviation, and their representatives indicated they do not oppose the request. The minimum permanent vertical clearance above top of rail for the northbound span will be 26 feet 1 inch. The minimum permanent vertical clearance above top of rail for the southbound span will be 23 feet.

Also, during construction, Caltrans is requesting a temporary horizontal clearance of 12 feet for both structures. Since this is within the requirements of Commission GO 26-D, Section 3, a temporary deviation is not needed. The minimum permanent horizontal clearance on the southbound structure will be 19 feet 3 inches. The minimum permanent horizontal clearance on the northbound structure will be 16 feet 2 inches.

In e-mails dated May 30, 2012, SMART and NWP stated that they approved the proposed temporary horizontal and vertical clearances.

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

- Widening the east side of southbound US 101 / SR 116 by 24 feet in order to provide a High Occupancy Vehicle lane. The bridge will be approximately 562 feet long and 83 feet in width.
- Demolishing the existing northbound US 101 / SR 116 structure and replacing it with a new span. The new bridge will have four lanes, be approximately 565 feet long and range from 59 feet to 80 feet 8 inches in width.

Commission staff has investigated the Caltrans' request, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As Caltrans, NWP and SMART 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.

All parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission General Orders and CA MUTCD.

This project is statutorily exempt from the requirements of the California Environment Quality Act of 1970, as amended [California Public Resources Code 21080.13].

Pursuant to Commission Resolution SX-76 and Section 16.2 of General Order (GO) 26-D, Caltrans is granted a temporary deviation from GO 26-D, Section 2.1 and is authorized a temporary overhead clearance of not less than 20 feet 6 inches above the top of the highest rail to the lowest of point on the overhead structure, during the period of construction of the US 101 / SR 116 structure, CPUC Crossing No. 005-37.50-A, DOT No. 863534A in the County of Sonoma.

The following requirements shall apply to the temporary deviation to GO 26-D, Section 2.1:

1. Caltrans shall notify SMART, NWP and the Sacramento office of the Commission's Consumer Protection and Safety Division – Rail Operations Safety Branch (ROSB) and Rail Crossings Engineering Section at least 15 days but not more than 30 days in advance of the date when Caltrans will create the temporary reduced overhead clearance. Commission notification may be made to [rces@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:rces@cpuc.ca.gov).

2. SMART shall issue instructions to all agencies responsible for operation of trains over these tracks of the temporary reduced clearance of 20 feet 6 inches beneath the US 101 / SR 116 structure, and shall submit the instructions in advance of the date when Caltrans will create the temporary reduced overhead clearance to the Sacramento office of ROSB and RCES. Notification may be made to [rces@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:rces@cpuc.ca.gov).

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. Any written request for a time extension must include concurrence letters by involved parties in support of the time extension. If an extension is requested, the Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

Within 30 days after final completion of this project, Caltrans shall notify RCES that the authorized work is completed, by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G. 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](mailto:rces@cpuc.ca.gov) as outlined on the web page.

At the conclusion of the project, SMART should submit an updated FRA inventory form to the Federal Railroad Administration, reflecting the changes. Commission requests a concurrent copy of the updated inventory form be submitted to [rces@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:rces@cpuc.ca.gov).

If you have any questions, please contact David Stewart at (916) 928-2515 or [atm@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:atm@cpuc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



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