

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320W 4th Street, Suite 500
Los Angeles, CA 90013



October 16, 2013

File Number: XREQ 2013100002
El Portal
City of San Clemente, Orange County

Patricia Watkins
Assistant Director, Public Projects
Southern California Regional Rail Authority
279 East Arrow Highway, Suite 101
San Dimas, CA 91773

SENT VIA EMAIL

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the El Portal Pedestrian At-Grade Rail Crossing, Identified as CPUC Crossing No. 101OR-204.1-D and DOT No. 922848K, In The City of San Clemente, Orange County.

Dear Ms. Watkins:

This refers to your letter, dated September 9, 2013, received by us on September 24, 2013, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to modify the El Portal pedestrian at-grade rail crossing (crossing) of Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) Orange County Subdivision mainline track in the City of San Clemente (City), Orange County. The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 101OR-204.1-D and DOT No. 922848D.

The crossing is equipped with two Commission Standard 9 (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm) warning devices and Commission Standard 1-D Pedestrian/Bicycle crossing signs. The crossing connects a segment of the San Clemente Pedestrian Beach Trail (Trail) located east of the track, to the beach area located west of the track. BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) operates approximately eight freight trains, and the National Passenger Railroad Corporation (Amtrak) and SCRRA operate approximately 42 passenger trains daily at a maximum train speed of 40 MPH at the crossing.

As part of the Orange County Grade Crossing Safety Enhancement Program, SCRRA proposes the following alterations:

- Widen the crossing by installing additional concrete panels at north and south of the existing panels;
- Construct new concrete pavement surfacing for the crossing and sidewalk approaches, as shown on plans;
- Install Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant detectable warning tactile strips on each approach. Placement of the tactile strips should be two feet minimum from the active warning device;
- Install emergency exit swing gates at each crossing approach;

- Install pedestrian channelization in the form of guard rail and hand railing at the crossing approaches to prevent trespassing;
- Install pedestrian travel lane and edge lines over the track and through the crossing;
- Apply California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CA MUTCD) compliant signage and pavement markings, including “NO TRESPASSING” and R15-8 “LOOK” signs.

The Commission’s Rail Crossings Engineering Section (RCES) investigated the request by SCRRA and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As SCRRA, BNSF, Amtrak and the City are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, the improvements as described in your request dated September 9, 2013 and summarized above are authorized.

During a field inspection on September 5, 2013, RCES staff noticed the SCRRA right-of-way fencing along the Trail is installed at certain segments only, and witnessed significant trespassers between the Trail and the beach area along segments without fencing. This is an important safety concern and RCES recommends SCRRA install fencing along the entire San Clemente Beach Trail. The additional fencing was approved in G.11-06-001 Commission GO 88-B authorization approval letter dated June 21, 2011 and does not require further GO 88 authorization.

Temporary traffic controls shall be provided in compliance with the current version of the CA MUTCD, published by the California Department of Transportation. All parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including Commission General Orders and the CA MUTCD.

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 RCES, 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, RCES may re-evaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

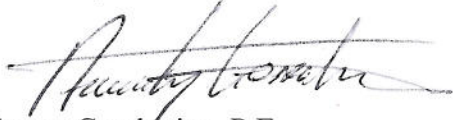
Within 30 days after completion of this project, the City and/or SCRRA shall notify RCES that the authorized work is completed, by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G title *Report of Changes at Highway Grade Crossings and Separation*. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the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

At the conclusion of the project, SCRRA must 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.

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If you have any questions, please contact Chi Cheung To at (213) 576-5766 or cct@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



Anton Garabetian, P.E.
Program and Project Supervisor
Rail Crossings Engineering Section
Safety and Enforcement Division

Attachment: G.11-06-001 – San Clemente North Beach Pedestrian Crossing

cc: **(SENT VIA EMAIL)**
Cassim Mamoon, Amtrak
Thomas Bonigut, City of San Clemente
Melvin Thomas, BNSF
Aaron Azevedo, SCCRA