

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



February 18, 2016

File Number: XREQ 2016010011

Bruce W. Armistead
Director of Operations and Maintenance
California High Speed Rail Authority
770 L Street, Suite 620
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the Ashlan Avenue Grade Separated (Overhead) Highway- Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 001B-199.90-A and DOT No. 753317W, in the City of Fresno, County of Fresno.

Dear Mr. Armistead:

This refers to your letter received by us via email on January 14, 2016, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter the Ashlan Avenue grade separated highway-rail crossing (crossing) over Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) three tracks in the City of Fresno (City), Fresno County.

The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) proposes to demolish the Ashlan Avenue overhead and construct a new overhead very close to the previous location in order to install two mainline tracks of the CHSRA adjacent to the UPRR tracks. The new overhead will span over both UPRR and CHSRA track sets. The Ashlan Avenue crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 001B-199.90-A and DOT No. 753317W. The CPUC Crossing No. for the proposed CHSRA mainline tracks will be 135S-186.30-A. The proposed, altered grade separated crossing upon completion will retain the current DOT No. of 753317W for the crossing, which will then include both sets of tracks.

The new Ashlan Avenue overhead, which will provide a wider, longer, and higher structure than the existing one, will have two eastbound and two westbound through lanes, two shoulders, and one sidewalk. The adjacent State Route (SR) 99/Ashlan Avenue interchange will be reconstructed and realigned toward the west to provide adequate space between UPRR and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) right-of-way (ROW), in order to accommodate the installation of CHSRA two tracks. The proposed alignment of the CHSRA tracks will be generally parallel to the UPRR tracks. The existing location of the UPRR tracks will remain unchanged.

This crossing project is part of Construction Package 1 (CP1) of the California High Speed Train System (CHSTS) Project, which involves the Merced to Fresno Segment of the CHSTS. CHSRA has prepared and filed a Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIR/EIS Project) with findings of significant impact for the overall Merced to Fresno Segment of the CHSTS. However, this particular crossing project, as an alteration of an existing grade separated crossing, is not mentioned or identified in these environmental documents as having a significant impact on the environment.

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

- Establishing a temporary minimum vertical clearance envelope exception of 21 feet-6 inches during all phases of construction over UPRR tracks;
- Demolishing the existing Ashlan Avenue Overhead;
- Constructing the new Ashlan Avenue Overhead. The new overhead shall meet the vertical and horizontal clearance requirements of the Commission's GO 26-D. The UPRR minimum vertical clearance requirement is 25 feet-9.5 inches at existing tracks from the bridge soffit, 24 feet-9.75 inches at 25 feet off center of existing tracks, and 23 feet-4 inches at ROW line. The CHSRA minimum vertical clearance requirement per plans at track 1 is 26 feet-11.5 inches and at track 2 is 25 feet-10.5 inches. The horizontal clearance requirements for both the UPRR and CHSRA track sets vary; and
- Installing CHSRA tracks.

Pursuant to Commission Resolution SX-76 and Section 16.2 of GO 26-D, CHSRA is granted a temporary deviation from GO 26-D, Section 2.1 and is authorized a temporary vertical clearance of not less than 21 feet-6 inches from the top of rail, during construction of the structure.

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

1. CHSRA shall notify UPRR and the Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division – Rail Operations Safety Branch (ROSB) and Rail Crossings Engineering Branch (RCEB) at least 15 days but not more than 30 days in advance of the date when CHSRA will create the temporary reduced vertical clearance. For the Commission, this notification may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.
2. UPRR shall issue instructions to all individuals responsible for operation of trains over these tracks of the temporary reduced vertical clearance of 21 feet-6 inches, and shall submit the instructions in advance of the date when CHSRA will create the temporary reduced vertical clearance to the office of ROSB and RCEB. This notification may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

The overall Merced to Fresno Segment of the CHSTS Project, of which this project is a part, is not exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended [California Public Resources Code § 21084]. As a modification of an existing grade-separated crossing, this project is statutorily exempt from the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act of 1970, as amended. [California Public Resources Code §21080.13].

The RCEB staff has investigated the request by CHSRA, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the City, Caltrans, UPRR, and CHSRA (Parties) are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, CHSRA may proceed with the improvements as described in its request letter and attachments, and summarized above.

All Parties shall comply with all applicable rules, including other Commission General Orders and the latest version of the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (CAMUTCD). Temporary traffic controls shall be in compliance with the latest version of the CAMUTCD and

detour plans as agreed to by the Parties. A temporary traffic control plan will be coordinated with the City and UPRR.

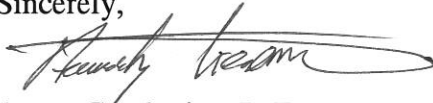
This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within three years of the date of this letter. Upon written request to this office, the time to complete the project may be extended. A written request for a time extension must include concurrence letters by interested Parties in support of the time extension. If an extension is requested, RCEB may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

Within 30 days after completion of this project, CHSRA shall notify RCEB 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 at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/crossings/>. This report may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

At the conclusion of the project, CHSRA should submit an updated electronic inventory form (Form F6180.71) to the Federal Railroad Administration, reflecting the changes.

If you have any questions, please contact Marvin Kennix at (916) 928-3809 or email at mlk@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



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

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Cc: Andrew Benelli
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