

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



June 6, 2017

File Number: XREQ 2017050002

Dana Hertfelder
Director of Public Works
County of Merced
345 West 7th Street
Merced, CA 95341

SENT VIA E-MAIL

Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the Shaffer Road At-Grade Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 002-1064.00 and DOT No. 028705X in the County of Merced.

Dear Mr. Hertfelder:

This refers to your letter received by us via email on April 28, 2017, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter the Shaffer Road at-grade highway-rail crossing (crossing) of the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) track in the County of Merced (County). The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 002-1064.00 and DOT No. 028705X.

The one northbound and one southbound through lane crossing has one track and is equipped with two Commission Standard No. 9 (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm) warning devices. At the crossing, BNSF operates 27 freight trains and Amtrak operates 12 passenger trains per day. The crossing is a rural, minor arterial roadway with average daily vehicle traffic of 11,000.

This project is primarily being done to modify and improve traffic signal operations at and adjacent to the crossing and prevent the queuing of vehicles back to the track. The modified and improved traffic signal operations will eliminate a dangerous "yellow trap" condition that currently exists at the crossing. This project is being done in conjunction with the federally funded Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Program (formerly known as the Section 130 Program).

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

- Installing 15 seconds of railroad advance preemption for traffic signal operations at the Shaffer Road and Santa Fe Drive intersection adjacent to the crossing;
- Installing railroad circuitry (by railroad) to enable the installation of advance preemption;
- Installing a pre-signal for northbound traffic across the crossing;
- Modifying the traffic signals, including implementing limited service operations during preemption after the track clearance green phase has been provided;
- Installing "NO RIGHT TURN" R3-1 blank-out signs for eastbound traffic on Santa Fe Drive;
- Installing a new 2 foot wide, 8 inch high, and 150 foot long raised median south of the crossing;

- Installing a pedestrian barricade at the end of the sidewalk in the southwest quadrant of the crossing and relocating the existing “sidewalk ends” sign onto the barricade; and
- Installing all signage, striping, pavement markings, and railroad stop lines.

The Commission’s Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) staff has investigated the request by the County, and finds it adequately addresses compliance and safety. As the County and BNSF (Parties) are in agreement as to the design and apportionments of the cost under the provisions of GO 88-B, the County may proceed with the improvements as described in its request letter and attachments, and summarized above.

BNSF must ensure that Emergency Notification Signs are installed to comply with Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 234.309.

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.

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, RCEB may reevaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

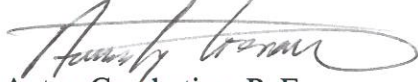
Within 30 days after completion of this project, the County shall notify RCEB that the authorized work is completed by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the CPUC web site at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/crossings/>. This report may be submitted electronically to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

At the conclusion of the project, BNSF should submit an updated electronic inventory form (Form F6180.71) to the Federal Railroad Administration, reflecting the changes. 49 CFR 234 Section 234.409 requires railroads to submit periodic crossing inventory updates, a minimum of once every three years. The Commission requests a concurrent copy of the updated inventory form be submitted to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

Dana Hertfelder
XREQ 2017050002
June 6, 2017
Page 3 of 3

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: Taylor Smith
Joe Giulian
Bree Arnett

