

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



July 11, 2018

File Number: XREQ 2018060002
Avenue 15
County of Madera

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 Avenue 15 Crossing, CPUC Crossing No. 002-1018.80 and DOT No. 028606A, in an Unincorporated Area of Madera County.

Dear Mr. Armistead:

This refers to your letter received by us via email on May 31, 2018, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission) General Order (GO) 88-B, to alter the Avenue 15 at-grade highway-rail crossing (crossing) of the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) tracks in an unincorporated area of Madera County (County). The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 002-1018.80 and DOT Crossing No. 028606A.

The California High Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) proposes to eliminate the crossing and replace it with a grade-separated (overhead) crossing over BNSF's two existing tracks, a mainline and a siding (#7746), and CHSRA's two proposed tracks. The two CHSRA tracks will be located generally parallel and west of the BNSF tracks. The overhead roadway will be a multi-span bridge that will consist of two 12 foot wide vehicle lanes and two 8 foot wide shoulders.

The new crossing will be identified as CPUC Crossing No. 002-1018.80-A for the BNSF tracks and 135S-171.32-A for the CHSRA tracks. The crossing will be identified as DOT Crossing No. 968499G, shared by both sets of BNSF and CHSRA tracks.

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

- Eliminating BNSF's at-grade highway-rail crossing at Avenue 15;
- Constructing the new Avenue 15 Overhead over the BNSF and CHSRA tracks;
- Installing two CHSRA tracks west of the BNSF tracks; and
- Installing a continuous Access Restricted (AR) fence or barrier. The AR fence will be 8 foot high and consist of welded wire mesh.

The overhead shall meet the vertical and horizontal clearance requirements of the Commission's GO 26-D and the CHSRA.

CHSRA states in its GO 88-B request that although there is no falsework proposed, a temporary clearance exception for a minimum vertical clearance of 21 feet-6 inches is requested for consistency with the drawings. 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. BNSF provided concurrence to the proposed modification and impaired temporary vertical clearance during construction. No temporary horizontal clearance exception is requested.

The following requirements pertain to the temporary vertical clearance authorization:

1. CHSRA shall notify BNSF and the Commission's Safety and Enforcement Division – Rail Operations Safety Branch (ROSB) and Rail Crossings and 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. BNSF shall issue instructions to all individuals responsible for operation of trains over the track of the temporary reduced vertical clearance of 21 feet-6 inches and 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.
3. The existing at-grade highway-rail crossing shall be closed, and all warning devices and signage shall be removed once the new grade separated crossing is constructed and traffic is routed onto the complete grade separated crossing.

This crossing project is part of the California High-Speed Train (CHST) Project Construction Package 1 (CP1) involving the Merced to Fresno Section. CHSRA has prepared and filed a Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, with findings of significant impact, for the overall Merced to Fresno Section of the CHST Project, of which this project is a part, which is not exempt from the requirements of the California Environment Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, as amended [California Public Resources Code § 21084]; however, as this particular crossing project involves eliminating an existing at-grade crossing and replacing it with a 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 County, BNSF, 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.

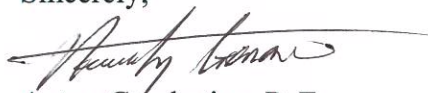
This authorization shall expire if the above conditions are not complied with or if the work is not completed within six years of the date of this letter. The County, BNSF, and CHSRA are in agreement with the six-year authorization in which to complete construction of the proposed improvements. Upon 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 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 must submit an updated electronic inventory form (Form F6180.71) to the Federal Railroad Administration, reflecting the changes. The Commission requests a concurrent copy of the updated inventory form be submitted to rceb@cpuc.ca.gov.

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

Cc: Ahmad Alkhayyat, County
Taylor Smith, BNSF

