

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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



July 8, 2019

File Number: XREQ 2019060003  
McCombs Avenue  
Unincorporated Kern County

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

**SENT VIA EMAIL**

**Re: General Order 88-B Request for Authority to Alter the McCombs Avenue At-Grade Highway-Rail Crossing, CPUC Crossing Number 002-914.50 and DOT Number 028306L in unincorporated area of Kern County**

Dear Mr. Armistead:

This refers to your letter, received by us on June 13, 2019, requesting authorization, pursuant to California Public Utilities Commission (Commission/CPUC) General Order (GO) 88-B, to modify the McCombs Avenue highway-rail at-grade crossing (crossing) of BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) Bakersfield Subdivision track in unincorporated area of Kern County (County). The crossing is identified as CPUC Crossing No. 002-914.50 and DOT No. 028306L.

The crossing consists of a single track and two-lane roadway, located approximately 50 feet west of the intersection of McCombs Avenue/Central Valley Highway (State Route 43). The crossing is equipped with two Commission Standard 9 (flashing light signal assembly with automatic gate arm) warning devices. BNSF and Amtrak respectively operate approximately thirty freight trains and fourteen passenger trains daily, with a maximum speed of 70 miles per hour (MPH) for freight service, and 79 MPH for passenger service over this line. The average daily traffic is approximately 1,338 vehicles.

The California High-Speed Rail Authority (CHSRA) proposes to eliminate the at-grade McCombs Avenue crossing and replace it with a grade-separated (overhead) crossing over the BNSF track and two California High-Speed Train System (CHSTS) proposed tracks. The two CHSTS tracks will be located generally parallel and west of the BNSF track. 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 alterations, as indicated in the CHSRA's request letter and/or shown on the plans, consist of:

- Eliminating the BNSF at-grade highway-rail crossing at McCombs Avenue;
- Constructing the new McCombs Avenue overhead crossing over the BNSF and CHSTS tracks approximately 640 feet north of the existing crossing;
- Installing two CHSTS tracks west of the BNSF tracks; and
- Constructing an intrusion protection barrier (IPB) between the CHSTS and BNSF tracks.

The overhead shall meet the vertical and horizontal clearance requirements of the Commission's GO 26-D and the CHSRA. No temporary clearance exceptions are requested.

The existing at-grade crossing DOT No. 028306L shall be retired. The new grade-separated crossing shall be identified as CPUC Crossing Nos. 002-914.594-A for the BNSF track and 135S-277.30-A for the CHSRA tracks. The new crossing shall be identified as DOT No. 968544Y, shared by both BNSF and CHSRA tracks.

This crossing project is part of the California High-Speed Train (CHST) Project Construction Package 4 (CP 4), which is a 22-mile stretch bounded by the terminus of CP 2-3 at a point one mile north of the Tulare-Kern county line and Poplar Avenue at the south. CHSRA has prepared and filed a Final Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement, with findings of significant impact for CP 4 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 Commission's Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB) investigated CHSRA's request 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, the improvements as described in your request letter, and summarized above are authorized.

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). During construction, 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 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, RCEB may re-evaluate the crossing prior to granting an extension.

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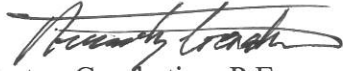
Within 30 days after completion of this project, the CHSRA shall notify RCEB that the authorized work is completed, by submitting a completed Commission Standard Form G titled *Report of Changes at Highway Grade Crossings and Separation*. Form G requirements and forms can be obtained at the CPUC web site Form G page at <http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/crossings>. This report may be submitted electronically to [rceb@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:rceb@cpuc.ca.gov) as outlined on the web page.

At the conclusion of the project, BNSF should electronically submit an updated Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) inventory form (Form F6180.71) to the FRA, reflecting the changes. Commission requests a concurrent copy of the updated inventory form be submitted to [rceb@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:rceb@cpuc.ca.gov).

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If you have any questions, please contact Matthew Cervantes at (213) 266-4716 or [mci@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:mci@cpuc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,



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

C: (SENT VIA EMAIL)

Craig M. Pope, Kern County  
Garth Fernandez, Cal-Trans  
Taylor Smith, BNSF

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