

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

COLUMBIA BASIN RAILROAD  
COMPANY, INC.

Petitioner,

Seeking Approval to Upgrade Signals  
at a Highway-Rail Grade Crossing and  
Requesting Disbursement from the  
Grade Crossing Protective Fund

DOCKET TR-200098

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY  
ACTIVE WARNING DEVICES AT A  
PUBLIC HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE  
CROSSING AT MCMANAMAN  
ROAD AND AUTHORIZING  
EXPENDITURE FROM THE GRADE  
CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND

USDOT: 396437C

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On February 12, 2020, the Columbia Basin Railroad Company, Inc., (CBRW or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition seeking approval to modify active warning devices at a highway-rail grade crossing, identified as USDOT 396437C (Petition). The crossing is located at the intersection of McManaman Road and the Petitioner's tracks in Adams county near the city of Othello. The Petitioner further requests the Commission authorize an expenditure of \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) to pay for a portion of the modifications.
- 2 McManaman Road is a two-lane roadway with a speed limit of 30 miles per hour. Estimated average annual daily vehicle traffic through the crossing is 1,019 vehicles. McManaman Road is part of an established truck route with approximately 15 percent commercial vehicle traffic. McManaman Road is also part of an established school bus route with four school buses traveling over the crossing daily. Two freight trains operate over this crossing daily at up to 10 miles per hour. No passenger trains operate over the crossing.
- 3 Railroad warning devices at the McManaman Road crossing consist of mast-mounted LED flashing lights, a bell, crossbucks, advance warning signs on both approaches, one bank of 36 a.h. batteries, a Safetran CXP-2 power supply, and bench top relays. The Petitioner proposes to install new GNB 264 and 368 amp batteries, a CXP-3 power supply, stick release timer, and new type "ST" wall-mounted relays, along with all required hardware and connections. These upgrades will improve safety at the crossing.

4 On January 30, 2020, a vehicle struck and destroyed the cabinet containing the train detection and signal control equipment at the McManaman Road crossing. As a result, the Petitioner is replacing the cabinet and is requesting GCPF funds to upgrade the existing batteries and 1960s-vintage train detection and signal control equipment. The total cost of the project, not including the cabinet, is \$24,477.58. The total amount requested is \$20,000. GCPF funds are available for this project. The Petitioner will cover costs in excess of \$20,000 and will provide the labor needed for installation.

5 Commission staff (Staff) has investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) expenditure from the GCPF must not exceed \$20,000, (2) payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for materials and verification by Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed, (3) the Petitioner signs and returns the attached project agreement, (4) the project must be completed by August 1, 2020, (5) traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*, and (6) the Petitioner must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

### **DISCUSSION**

6 RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. RCW 81.53.271 authorizes the Commission to disburse funds from the GCPF to pay for improvements to highway-rail grade crossings. We find that the proposed modifications will improve overall safety for roadway users. Accordingly, the Commission grants the Petition subject to the conditions recommended by Staff in Paragraph 5, above.

### **FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

7 (1) The Commission is an agency of the state of Washington having jurisdiction over public highway-rail grade crossings within the state of Washington, and authority to approve and administer disbursements from the GCPF.

8 (2) The grade crossing at McManaman Road, identified as USDOT 396437C, is a public highway-rail grade crossing within the state of Washington.

- 9 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires the Commission to grant approval prior to any changes to public highway-rail grade crossings within the state of Washington.<sup>1</sup>
- 10 (4) RCW 81.53.271 allows the Commission to disburse funds from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund to pay for the installation of a grade crossing protective device, without requiring the Petitioner to share the cost.
- 11 (5) Commission Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the conditions set out in paragraph 5, above.
- 12 (6) After reviewing the Petition filed by CBRW on February 12, 2020, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission should grant the Petition and request for disbursement of funds, subject to conditions.

### ORDER

#### THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 13 The Columbia Basin Railroad Company, Inc.'s Petition to upgrade warning devices at highway-rail grade crossing, located at McManaman Road, is granted subject to conditions. Part of the cost of the equipment for this upgrade shall be paid from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. Approval of the Petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$20,000;
  - (2) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for materials and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed;
  - (3) The Petitioner must sign and return the attached project agreement;
  - (4) The project must be completed no later than August 1, 2020;
  - (5) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*; and,
  - (6) The Petitioner must notify the Commission within 60 days of the completion of the upgrades authorized in this Order. Acceptance of the

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<sup>1</sup> See also WAC 480-62-150.

upgrades is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, and verification that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified in this Order.

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-180762. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective March 12, 2020.

**WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

**MARK L. JOHNSON,**  
Executive Director and Secretary

**NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an order delegated to the Executive Secretary for decision. As authorized in WAC 480-07-904, you must file any request for Commission review of this order no later than 14 days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's website.**