



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

621 Woodland Square Loop S.E. • Lacey, Washington 98503

P.O. Box 47250 • Olympia, Washington 98504-7250

(360) 664-1160 • TTY (360) 586-8203

August 31, 2021

Jennifer Lange, P.E.  
Assistant County Engineer  
Douglas County Transportation and Land Services  
140 19<sup>th</sup> Street NW  
East Wenatchee, WA 98802

Sent by email and First Class mail

**Re: TR-210568 – Notice of Intent to Establish a Railroad Quiet Zone at Spanish Castle Road, USDOT #065809D**

Dear Ms. Lange:

On July 20, 2021, the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (UTC) received notification from Douglas County (County) of its intent to establish a railroad quiet zone at the Spanish Castle Road crossing, identified as USDOT 065809D, on the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) mainline near Rock Island. This is the only highway-rail grade crossing included in this proposed quiet zone.

On June 30, 2021, UTC Staff (Staff) participated in an onsite quiet zone review of the Spanish Castle Road crossing along with representatives from the County, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA), BNSF, and the developer of the Spanish Castle Master Planned Resort, Big River Development, LLC.

The proposed quiet zone will be in effect 24 hours per day, seven days per week, and will extend one-quarter mile on each side of the crossing, which is the minimum length required by Title 49, Code of Federal Regulations, Part 222 – Use of Locomotive Horns at Public Highway-Rail Grade Crossings.

The County has installed Supplemental Safety Measures (SSM) to qualify for quiet zone designation, as well as other upgrades described in the notice.

State Of WASH.  
UTIL. AND TRANSP.  
COMMISSION

08/31/21 13:22

Received  
Records Management

As the information was not provided with the Notice of Intent, Staff requested and received the County's calculations of the impacts of its recent upgrades relative to the National Quiet Zone Risk Index (QZRI). As the crossing now stands with the recently installed SSMs, the County's calculations indicate that the QZRI for the crossing is 1646.19, which the County represents is below the significant risk threshold for the crossing.

Under current federal rules, the UTC may comment on quiet zone proposals but it does not have the authority to approve or deny them. Staff acknowledges that, based on the County's QRZI calculations and subject to verification by the FRA, the crossing will qualify for designation as a quiet zone. Staff supports the recently installed SSMs as well as the other recent improvements, as they will improve safety and reduce the possibility of motorists driving around downed crossing gates when a train is approaching. The recent installation of a pedestrian pathway and signals with gates will also reduce the likelihood of pedestrian trespassing occurring at the crossing.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments. Please contact Mike Turcott, Transportation Planning Specialist, at (360) 664-1119 or by email at [mike.turcott@utc.wa.gov](mailto:mike.turcott@utc.wa.gov) if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark L. Johnson".

Mark L. Johnson  
Executive Director and Secretary

cc: Jeffrey Stewart, Federal Railroad Administration  
Federal Railroad Administration, Office of Safety, Washington DC  
Stephen Semenick, BNSF  
Patrick Sullivan, AMTRAK