

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

THE BNSF RAILWAY COMPANY,)	DOCKET NO. TR-050382
)	
Petitioner,)	ORDER NO. 01
)	
v.)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
)	INTERCONNECT WARNING
SULTAN, WASHINGTON,)	SIGNALS AND MODIFY TRAIN
)	DETECTION CIRCUITRY AT 5 TH
Respondent.)	STREET
)	
)	USDOT: 084549N
)	WUTC: 2A 1761.30
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On March 14, 2005, the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) filed a petition with the Commission seeking approval to interconnect railroad crossing warning signals with highway traffic signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is identified as USDOT 084549N and located at the intersection 5th Street and the petitioner's tracks in Sultan, Washington. Funding for the upgrades is pursuant to the Inter-modal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act, in cooperation with the Washington State Department of Transportation.

- 2 The city of Sultan has consented to an entry of an order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.

- 3 In the vicinity of the crossing, 5th Street is classified as a local roadway, with two lanes of traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 25 mph. The crossing is located approximately 90 feet south of the 5th Street/SR-2 roadway intersection. Average daily traffic over the 5th Street crossing is estimated at 1,200.

- 4 BNSF maintains one main track through the crossing. Daily train traffic averages 25 trains traveling at a maximum speed of 50 mph. Railroad warning devices at

the 5th Street grade crossing consist of cantilever-mounted flashing light signals with gates.

- 5 The proposal is related to the installation of a highway traffic signal at the 5th Street/SR-2 roadway intersection planned for the spring of 2005. Because of the relatively high average daily traffic volume on 5th Street, vehicle queues originating from the roadway intersection at SR-2 may extend back over the BNSF tracks – especially during peak traffic times. This scenario includes the possibility that a stopped motorist within the queue may become trapped on the tracks when a train is approaching. To address this hazard, BNSF and the city of Sultan have proposed interconnecting the railroad warning signals and the to-be-installed highway traffic signals. When the signals are interconnected, an approaching train will preempt the highway traffic signals, causing them to display a green light to clear any vehicle queues from the BNSF tracks prior to the arrival of a train at the crossing. The proposal also involves the installation of remote constant warning circuitry that is required to accommodate the signal interconnection.
- 6 The parties have agreed to implement a simultaneous preemption design, where preemption of the highway traffic signal will occur simultaneously with the activation of the railroad warning signals. Although the city of Sultan is responsible for the installation and design of the highway traffic signal, long-term maintenance and oversight regarding railroad preemption is the responsibility of the Washington State Department of Transportation.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington. *Chapter 81.53 RCW.*

- 8 (2) The 5th Street grade crossing, identified as USDOT 084549N, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 9 (3) WAC 480-62-150 (2)(e) requires that the Commission grant approval prior to any interconnection of railroad and highway signals at public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 10 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 11 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on May 11, 2005.
- 12 (6) After examination of the petition filed by the BNSF Railway Company on March 14, 2005, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 13 The petition of the BNSF Railway Company to interconnect railroad warning signals with highway traffic signals at that 5th Street railroad-highway grade crossing in Sultan, Washington, is granted. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The operation of traffic control devices at the railroad-highway grade crossing must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
 - (2) The Washington State Department of Transportation must ensure that the timing of each railroad preemption phase for the highway traffic signal is sufficient to clear any vehicle queues that may extend from the 5th Street/SR-2 roadway intersection

back over the BNSF Railway tracks, as determined by an engineering analysis.

- (3) Upon completion of the upgrades authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of WAC 480-62-150 and RCW 81.53.261, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 11th day of May, 2005.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary