

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

In The Matter of the Application of)	DOCKET NO. TR-050390
)	
TACOMA RAIL)	ORDER NO. 01
)	
Petitioner,)	ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR
)	DISBURSEMENT FROM THE GRADE
Requesting Disbursement from the)	CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
Grade Crossing Protective Fund)	
)	USDOT: 085268H
)	WUTC: 1M 9.48
.....)	

BACKGROUND

- 1 On March 16, 2005, Tacoma Rail filed an application with the Commission, seeking a disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund to improve warning signals at a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is identified as USDOT 085268H and located at the intersection of Columbia Street and the petitioner’s tracks, in Olympia, Washington.

- 2 In the vicinity of the crossing, Columbia Street is classified as an urban local roadway, with one lane for each direction of traffic and a vehicle speed limit of 25 mph. Average daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 8,000 vehicles, including trucks and school bus trips.

- 3 Tacoma Rail maintains one track through the crossing. Average daily train traffic includes six trains per week traveling a maximum of 10 mph.

- 4 Railroad warning devices at the Columbia Street grade crossing consist of shoulder-mounted flashing light signals that were installed in the 1950s. Since that time the original signal wiring has become unreliable and results in random false activations at the crossing, whereby the signals activate without being prompted by a train. In the past two years, Commission Staff has received at least three complaints from citizens and school bus drivers about the signals

being activated without proper cause. Because of the old wiring, the signal system is currently not compliant with federal rules and has been removed from service until the wiring is satisfactorily repaired. This designation requires that train crews stop and flag trains across the roadway.

- 5 Tacoma Rail plans to replace the existing wiring under the roadway that connects the signals to the circuitry house. The upgrade will solve the problem related to false activations and generally improve the reliability of the warning system.
- 6 Petitioner requests that Grade Crossing Protective Fund monies be allocated to pay for the upgrades. The total approximate cost of the project is \$12,000. Commission Staff recommended that a disbursement of \$10,000 be made towards this project. The recommendation to limit funding to this amount resulted from a combination of limited available funds, and prioritization of the merits of the project against similar projects for which GCPF disbursement is sought. There are currently funds available to disburse \$10,000 towards this project. Staff has verified that any remaining costs for this project will be paid by Tacoma Rail.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having authority to approve and administer disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. Chapter 81.53.271 RCW and 81.53.281 RCW.
- 8 (2) The project for which disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is sought is eligible for funding consideration under the Grade Crossing Protective Fund Policy and Interpretive Statement in Docket No. TR-031384, and complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.271 and RCW 81.53.281.

- 9 (3) Commission Staff investigated the request based on the review criteria specified in the Grade Crossing Protective Fund Policy and Interpretive Statement in Docket No. TR-031384, and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 10 (4) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on March 31, 2005.
- 11 (5) After examination of the application filed by Tacoma Rail, on March 16, 2005, giving consideration to all relevant matters, and for the reasons stated in paragraphs 4 through 6, the Commission grants the request for disbursement of funds.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 12 The request of Tacoma Rail, seeking disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund for the installation of new crossing signal wiring at the Columbia Street grade crossing in Olympia, Washington is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$10,000.
 - (2) The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.
 - (3) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for materials and labor, and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.

- (4) The project must be completed, and the associated request for reimbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must be on file with the Commission no later than May 31, 2005.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, direct the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 31st day of March, 2005.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary