

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

WASHINGTON STATE	)	DOCKET TR-071915
DEPARTMENT OF	)	
TRANSPORTATION,	)	ORDER 01
	)	
Petitioner,	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
	)	RECONSTRUCT A PUBLIC
v.	)	HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING
	)	AND INTERCONNECT RAILROAD
BNSF Railway Company,	)	WARNING SIGNALS AND
	)	HIGHWAY TRAFFIC SIGNALS
Respondent	)	AT PULVER ROAD
	)	
	)	USDOT: 092252D
.....	)	UTC: 2C15.20

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On September 20, 2007, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) filed a petition with the Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) seeking approval to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Pulver Road in Skagit County. Reconstructing the crossing is part of a larger project by WSDOT to widen State Route 20 (SR-20) and install a traffic signal at the crossing.
- 2 WSDOT also proposes relocating or reconstructing two additional crossings associated with this project to upgrade safety at the crossings (see Dockets TR-071914, Avon-Allen Road, and TR-071916, Peterson Road). The tracks of the BNSF Railway Company (BNSF) cross the road at each location. The Pulver Road grade crossing is located within WSDOT limited access right-of-way for SR-20. WSDOT is therefore the designated road authority for this project. After completion of the project, the portion of Pulver Road encompassing the grade crossing will revert to Skagit County.
- 3 On September 27, 2007, BNSF consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 4 Pulver Road is currently a two-lane road with one lane in each direction. WSDOT will increase the number of southbound lanes to two. WSDOT estimates average daily vehicle traffic over the crossing at 3,550, which includes commercial motor vehicles. The posted speed limit is 35 miles per hour.

- 5 The railroad tracks are branch tracks off the main BNSF line, with two trains using the crossing each day. Current speed limit for the trains is 10 miles per hour, although WSDOT states the speed may increase to 20 miles per hour in the near future.
- 6 Current warning devices at the crossing include cross-bucks on each approach.
- 7 WSDOT will replace existing warning devices with shoulder-mounted signals and gates on the northbound approach and cantilever-mounted signals and gates on the southbound approach. Both approaches will include constant warning train detection circuitry. The signals will interconnect with the new highway traffic signal to clear vehicles from the tracks when a train approaches. When the signals are in preemption mode, right turns from SR-20 into the crossing will be prohibited with a “R3-1a” Activated Blank-Out warning sign, and left turns will be prohibited by a red turn arrow. WSDOT will also upgrade the crossing surface with concrete materials.
- 8 The proposed upgrades are in the interest of improving safety and convenience for roadway users.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9 (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.*
- 10 (2) The proposed reconstruction of a crossing involves a public railroad-highway grade crossing, as defined in RCW 81.53.010.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to reconstructing a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions identified below.
- 13 (5) After examination of the petition filed by the Washington State Department of Transportation on September 20, 2007, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

**ORDER**

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

14 The petition of the Washington State Department of Transportation to reconstruct a railroad-highway grade crossing at Pulver Road and the Respondent's tracks in Skagit County is granted, as follows:

- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in the petition.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (3) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances from both the roadway and railroad tracks.
- (4) Upon completion of the reconstruction project authorized herein, Petitioner must notify the Commission.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.261, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington and effective March 10, 2008.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Executive Secretary