



U.S. Department
of Transportation

**Federal Railroad
Administration**

1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
Washington, DC 20590

OCT 23 2019

Mr. Joseph P. Rutan
County Engineer/Assistant Director
Whatcom County Public Works Department
322 North Commercial Street, Suite 301
Bellingham, WA 98225

RECEIVED
OCT 29 2019
WASH. UT. & TP. COMM

**Re: THR-1320003 (U.S. Department of Transportation National Highway-Rail Grade
Crossing Inventory Number 084795Y)**

Dear Mr. Rutan:

The Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) has reviewed the application submitted by Whatcom County (County), pursuant to Title 49 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 222.39(b).

The County is seeking FRA's approval of the suggested effectiveness rate for the proposed alternative safety measure (ASM) at the Cove Road crossing.

FRA approves the application for the crossing listed above. FRA has provided comments on the County's application in the enclosure. Implementation of the ASM described in the County's application will result in a Quiet Zone Risk Index of 6,863, which is below the Risk Index With Horns (the risk that would be present if the horns were still sounding) of 8,754.

If the proposed Quiet Zone will comply with the minimum length requirement in 49 CFR § 222.35(a)(1)(i), the County may submit its Notice of Quiet Zone Establishment in accordance with 49 CFR § 222.43, *What notices and other information are required to create or continue a quiet zone?*, after successfully installing the proposed ASM, as described in the application, and complying with all applicable quiet zone requirements contained in 49 CFR § 222.35, *What are the minimum requirements for quiet zones?*, and 49 CFR § 222.37, *Who may establish a quiet zone?*

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. James Payne, Staff Director, FRA Highway-Rail Grade Crossing Safety and Trespasser Programs, at 202-493-6005 or james.payne@dot.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Karl Alexy', written in a cursive style.

Karl Alexy
Associate Administrator for Railroad Safety
Chief Safety Officer

Enclosure

cc: Mr. Stephen Semenick, BNSF
Mr. Steven Pugsley, Amtrak
Ms. Kathy Hunter, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission

Enclosure

Grade Crossing Application Summary

FRA encourages the County to provide additional traffic control devices (such as signage, pavement markings, etc.) and vegetation control, as needed, to encourage proper traffic movements for vehicles and/or pedestrians at or across the tracks.

Crossing Number 084795Y (Cove Road)

FRA notes the County's proposal to install 100-foot long channelization devices on the east side of the crossing and 25-foot long channelization devices on the west side of the crossing. The County views this crossing treatment as an ASM with a suggested effectiveness rate of 0.417. FRA has determined that an effectiveness rate of 0.53 is more appropriate, given the lengths of the proposed channelization devices. FRA also notes the trees located in close proximity to the crossing and encourages the County to utilize vegetation control to enhance sight distance at or near the crossing.