



Northwest Railway Museum

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6 February 2004

Mike Rowswell
 Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission
 Rail Operations Manager
 1300 S. Evergreen Park Drive SW
 Olympia, WA 98504-7250

RECEIVED
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 WASH. UT. & TP. COMM.

RE: Request for clearance regulation variance WAC 480-60-050 (13b)

Dear Mr. Rowswell:

The Northwest Railway Museum (Museum) is planning to build a new facility called the Conservation and Restoration Center (CRC). This structure will be used to provide collection care for historic railway transportation artifacts that range in age from approximately 40 to 130 years of age. Most artifacts will be maintained in fully operational condition, and include steam and diesel locomotives, wood and steel freight and passenger cars, and other miscellaneous railway cars.

The Museum owns a 6-mile common carrier railway where the artifacts are demonstrated, and by necessity the CRC must be located adjacent to this rail line. The right of way is constrained by width, urban encroachment, and numerous sensitive areas. The site that has been selected is located within the widest portion of right of way, but is constrained on three sides by sensitive areas, and on the fourth side by the main line of the railway. These encumbrances do not allow us to increase the distance between tracks or to move the walls of the building.

The Museum requests that the WUTC approve a variance from the clearance regulations to allow 14-foot doors on the CRC. Normally, clearance regulations would require a 15-foot door. The narrower doors are required because the structure must have enough wall strength to support the doors and the roof. In considering this request, the Museum is hopeful that you will note that historically railroad roundhouse doors are 12 to 13 feet wide.

The Museum proposes to mitigate the close clearance with a timetable special instruction of the form "riding on the side of moving equipment in and out of the CRC is prohibited account close clearances", and by posting close clearance warnings on both tracks leading to the building.

The Museum handles over 40,000 passengers per year and has not had a FRA-reportable incident for many years. Given the proposed mitigation, we do not believe that the requested clearance variance will compromise safety in any quantifiable manner.

Thank you for your consideration,

Sincerely,

Richard R. Anderson
 Executive Director

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