

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT
OF TRANSPORTATION,

Petitioner,

COLUMBIA BASIN RAILROAD
COMPANY, INC.,

Respondent.

DOCKET TR-200033

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY
WARNING DEVICES AT A PUBLIC
HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
CROSSING AT STATE ROUTE 17
NEAR MOSES LAKE

USDOT: 396958T

BACKGROUND

- 1 On January 14, 2020, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition seeking approval to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at State Route 17 (SR-17) near Moses Lake, identified as USDOT 396958T (Petition).
- 2 Respondent Columbia Basin Railroad Company, Inc., (CBRR) consented to entry of a Commission order without further notice or hearing.
- 3 SR-17 is a two-lane road with a posted vehicle speed limit of 60 miles per hour. Average annual daily traffic through the crossing is estimated at 7,600 vehicles. SR-17 is part of an established school bus route with 20 school buses traveling over the crossing daily. SR-17 is also part of an established truck route with approximately 16 percent commercial vehicle traffic.
- 4 Warning devices at the SR-17 crossing consist of advance warning signs, crossbucks, and mast and cantilever-mounted flashing lights. CBRR operates two freight trains four days per week over this single main line track crossing at 10 miles per hour. No passenger trains travel over the crossing.
- 5 As part of this project, WSDOT will:
 - Install bus pull-out lanes on each approach to the crossing.
 - Extend the crossing surface and install upgraded concrete crossing panels to accommodate the widened roadway.

- Replace and relocate active warning devices.
- Install a new bungalow.
- Upgrade train detection to constant warning.
- Install active advance warning signs and skewed crossing signs on each approach.
- Relocate guard rails to protect roadside infrastructure.

6 These improvements are funded by the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, Railway-Highway Crossings (Section 130) program.

7 Commission staff (Staff) has investigated the petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) the modifications must conform to those described in and attached to 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, and (3) upon completion of the modifications authorized herein, WSDOT must notify the Commission within 60 days. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

DISCUSSION

8 RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. We find that the proposed modifications will improve overall safety for roadway users. Accordingly, the Commission grants the petition subject to the conditions that Staff recommends.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 9 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 10 (2) The SR-17 grade crossing, identified as USDOT 396958T, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. See also 480-62-150.

- 12 (4) Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions set out in paragraph 5, above.
- 13 (5) After examination of the petition filed by WSDOT on January 14, 2020, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 14 Washington State Department of Transportation's Petition to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at SR-17 is granted. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in and attached to 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) Upon completion of the modifications authorized herein, WSDOT must notify the Commission within 60 days. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.
- 15 The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-180762. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective January 17, 2020.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

MARK L. JOHNSON,
Executive Director and Secretary

NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an order delegated to the Executive Secretary for decision. As authorized in WAC 480-07-904(3), you must file any request for Commission review of this order no later than 14 days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's website.