

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION STAFF
RESPONSE TO BENCH REQUEST

DATE PREPARED: July 2, 2002
CASE NO.: TR-980897
REQUESTER: Bench

WITNESS: Ahmer Nizam
RESPONDER: Ahmer Nizam

BENCH REQUEST NO. 1:

Other than a barricade, what other means are available to specify the terminus point of Depot Road between State Route 14 and the tracks that would indicate to the public that access across the tracks is not possible via Depot Road?

RESPONSE:

Staff has contacted Mr. Bill Pierce of the Washington State Department of Transportation, who has stated WSDOT will install an additional barricade along SR-14, at the current intersection of SR-14 and Depot Road, to prevent motorists from entering Depot Road if the crossing is closed. WSDOT is aware that the properties adjacent to Depot Road and SR-14 need to have access, and would place any barricades in such a manner as to retain access to those properties. WSDOT has also indicated that they would provide advance warning of Depot Road's inaccessibility along SR-14. The advance warning would likely consist of a sign that is worded to warn motorists that the portion of Depot Road between SR-14 and the railroad tracks is closed. WSDOT and Klickitat County will meet on-site in the near future to design and identify the optimal placement for the barricade and advance warning signs.

Commission policy regarding the treatment of closed grade crossings is based on guidance provided by the Federal Highway Administration's *Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook*¹. Chapter IV, Section 3 (attached), of the handbook states that "When a crossing is permanently closed to highway traffic, the existing crossing should be obliterated by removing the crossing surface, pavement markings, and all traffic control devices both at the crossing and approaching the crossing." BNSF has indicated that, in addition to removing the crossing surface, they would also remove the roadway approaches up to the crossing within their right-of-way (see BNSF response). The barricades that BNSF typically installs at closed crossings are also specified in the attachment, and identified as "Figure 17. Type III Barricade." The removal of the roadway approaches and crossing surface, coupled with the installation of a type III barricade blocking access to the tracks would prevent motorists from accessing the current crossing location. The same section of the handbook also discusses the use of signs to provide advance warning of the closure, as described in the preceding paragraph.

¹ US Department of Transportation, *Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing Handbook*, Second Edition, September 1986 – FHWA-TS-86-215

BURLINGTON NORTHERN
RESPONSE TO BENCH REQUEST

DATE PREPARED: July 2, 2002
CASE NO.: TR-980897
REQUESTER: Bench

WITNESS: Mike Cowles, BNSF
RESPONDER: BNSF

BENCH REQUEST NO. 1:

Other than a barricade, what other means are available to specify the terminus point of Depot Road between State Route 14 and the tracks that would indicate to the public that access across the tracks is not possible via Depot Road?

RESPONSE:

In addition to the barricades, the BNSF would work jointly in the obliteration of the approaches to the crossing. Location where the obliteration is too [sic] start will be decided jointly between the county and the railroad. The X-buck at the crossing and the crossing surface would be removed as well.

Signage to identify the closure of the crossing in advance of the barricades is the responsibility of Klickitat County.