

BEFORE THE WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

In the Matter of the Petition of)	
)	
The Washington State Department of)	DOCKET NO. TR-010448
Transportation)	
)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION
for Exemption from Clearance Rules)	FOR EXEMPTION FROM
)	CLEARANCE RULES
)	
.....))	

BACKGROUND

On December 26, 2000, The Washington State Department of Transportation filed a petition requesting an exemption from the height clearance rules in WAC 480-60-040. The exemption is requested where SR 519 will cross over The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company tracks in Seattle, Washington. The common street name for SR 519 is South Royal Brougham Way.

DISCUSSION

Staff investigated this petition. The requested exemption is needed to construct major revisions to Interstate 90, State Route 519, and to add railroad tracks. The improvements are needed for improved traffic flow, freight mobility, and rail capacity. The changes will also improve safety around Safeco Field and the new football stadium.

The planned vertical clearance is 21.25 feet for two lead tracks. Clearance required by rule is 22.5 feet. The tracks will be operated at low speed, and freight trains will not use them in the foreseeable future. The extra clearance is not needed for the Amtrak and Sound Transit trains that will use the tracks. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co., Amtrak and Sound Transit filed letters supporting the proposed plans.

Staff recommends the petition be approved. A safety problem is not presented if The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Company posts signs for the impaired vertical clearance, and provides notice of it in its timetable.

FINDINGS

The Commissioners have reviewed the petition and have been fully advised in the matter. They believe that granting the petition, subject to the conditions set forth below, is in the public interest, and direct the Secretary to issue the Order.

ORDER

The Commission grants the petition of the railroad for an exemption from height clearance rules set forth in WAC 480-60-040 for spray arches installed at SR 519 located in Seattle, Washington and owned by The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co. on the following conditions:

1. Signs providing notice of the close height clearance must be maintained at the overcrossing.
2. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway Co. timetable or Superintendent's Bulletin must include notice of the close height clearance.

Dated at Olympia, Washington, and effective this th day of April, 2001.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary