

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON STATE  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Application of	)	DOCKET TR-061532
	)	
WASHINGTON STATE	)	ORDER 01
DEPARTMENT OF	)	
TRANSPORTATION,	)	
	)	
Petitioner,	)	
	)	ORDER GRANTING REQUEST FOR
Requesting Disbursement from the	)	DISBURSEMENT FROM THE GRADE
Grade Crossing Protective Fund	)	CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
.....	)	

**BACKGROUND**

- 1     On September 1, 2006, Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) sent a “Notice of Opportunity to Apply for Grant Monies from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund” in Docket TR-051633 to various interested parties eligible to apply for Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) grants.
- 2     On September 29, 2006, Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) filed an application with the Commission, requesting disbursement of \$4,000 from the GCPF to pay for a project related to public crossing safety.
- 3     WSDOT proposes to provide statewide training on the interaction between railroad warning signals (i.e. gates and lights) and traffic signals. When railroad warning signals and traffic signals do not interact with each other, traffic signals can cause lanes of vehicle traffic to back-up over railroad tracks. Vehicles can be trapped on the tracks when a train is approaching. When railroad and traffic signals interact, the railroad warning signal will “preempt” the traffic signal, allowing traffic to move smoothly over the crossing and then stopping additional traffic well in advance of the crossing.
- 4     WSDOT will target the training to state and local transportation personnel, as well as railroad public projects and signal staff. WSDOT explains the training will:
  - Increase awareness and knowledge of the dangers of railroad warning signals and traffic signals that do no interact.
  - Increase cooperation and coordination between railroads and local agencies regarding signal interaction.
  - Adopt a uniform statewide methodology for determining required preemption times.

- 5 Crossing accidents have increased slightly but steadily over the past several years. In 2002, there were 35 grade crossing accidents; in 2005, there were 50 accidents. Fatalities from these accidents have also increased, from three in 2002 to nine in 2005. At least some of the increase can be attributed to increasing train traffic and an increasing population. The number of train miles increased by 13% from 2000 to 2005. The state's population increased by 6.5% over this same time period.
- 6 WSDOT seeks \$4,000 to pay for the cost of the training. There are currently funds available to pay for the project.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 7 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having authority to approve and administer disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. *Chapter 81.53.271 RCW and 81.53.281 RCW.*
- 8 (2) The project for which disbursement from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is sought is eligible for funding consideration under Commission rules and complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.271 and RCW 81.53.281.
- 9 (3) Commission staff investigated the request based on the review criteria specified in the rules and recommended that it be granted.
- 10 (4) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on November 8, 2006.
- 11 (5) After examination of the application filed by Washington State Department of Transportation on September 29, 2006, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the request for disbursement of funds.

**ORDER**

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 12 The request of Washington State Department of Transportation, proposing to provide statewide training on the interaction between railroad warning signals (i.e. gates and lights) and traffic signals, is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$4,000.
  - (2) The work for which the Grade Crossing Protective Fund disbursement was approved must conform to the project description specified in the application.
  - (3) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for costs incurred and verification by Commission staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
  - (4) The project must be completed no later than June 30, 2007.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective November 8, 2006.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Executive Secretary