

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of	)	DOCKET TR-121882
	)	
COLUMBIA & COWLITZ	)	ORDER 01
RAILWAY COMPANY,	)	
	)	ORDER GRANTING PETITION TO
Petitioner,	)	MODIFY HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE
	)	CROSSING ACTIVE WARNING
	)	DEVICES AND AUTHORIZING
Seeking Approval to Upgrade Signals	)	EXPENDITURE FROM THE GRADE
at a Railroad-Highway Grade Crossing	)	CROSSING PROTECTIVE FUND
.....	)	USDOT: 840544R

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On November 28, 2012, the Columbia & Cowlitz Railway Company (CLC RR or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission), a petition seeking approval to modify active warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing. The crossing is identified as USDOT 840544R and is located at the intersection of Columbia Heights Road and the Petitioner's tracks in Kelso. The Petitioner further requested the Commission authorize an expenditure of \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund (GCPF) to pay for a portion of the upgrades.
- 2 Railroad warning devices at the Columbia Heights Road crossing consist of cantilever mounted flashing lights, crossbucks, gates and a warning bell. The Petitioner proposes to install shoulder-mounted gates and LED flashing lights and replace the existing warning bell with an electronic-type bell. The Petitioner also proposes to install a pre-wired bungalow and upgrade train detection. Commission Staff is facilitating the use of surplus equipment at this crossing which includes the bungalow and shoulder-mounted lights and gates. Shoulder-mounted gates and flashing lights are the appropriate warning devices for a two-lane roadway with a single track. These upgrades will improve the overall safety at the crossing because motorists and pedestrians can rely on these active warning devices to determine if a train is approaching the crossing. The LED flashing lights will provide greater visibility for the motoring public.
- 3 Columbia Heights Road is a two-lane roadway with a posted speed limit of 35 miles per hour. Average annual daily vehicle traffic through the crossing is estimated at 7,000 vehicles which includes 12 school buses. The crossing is not part of an established truck

route. Four freight trains per day operate at 10 miles per hour over the single track main line crossing. No passenger trains operate over the crossing.

- 4 The Petitioner is requesting a disbursement of \$20,000 to pay for a portion of the upgrades. The total approximate cost of the project is \$23,350. The Petitioner is contributing the remainder of the cost for the upgrades. An expenditure of \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund is available to help fund the improvements.

### FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 5 (1) The Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington, and authority to approve and administer disbursements from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. *RCW 81.53; RCW 81.53.271; RCW 81.53.281.*
- 6 (2) The grade crossing at Columbia Heights Road, identified as USDOT 840544R, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 7 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires the Commission grant approval prior to any changes to public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington. *See also WAC 480-62-150.*
- 8 (4) RCW 81.53.261 allows the Commission to disburse up to \$20,000 from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund to pay for the installation of a grade crossing protective device, without requiring the Petitioner to share the cost.
- 9 (5) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 10 (6) After reviewing CLC RR's petition filed on November 28, 2012, and giving due consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition and request for disbursement of funds.

### ORDER

#### THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 11 Columbia & Cowlitz Railway Company's petition to upgrade warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing, located at Columbia Heights Road and the Petitioner's

tracks, is granted. The cost of this upgrade shall be paid from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund. Approval of the petition is subject to the following conditions:

- (1) Expenditure from the Grade Crossing Protective Fund must not exceed \$20,000.
- (2) Payment will be made upon presentation of claim for reimbursement for materials and labor, and verification by Commission Staff that the work has been satisfactorily completed.
- (3) CLC RR must sign and return the attached project agreement.
- (4) The project must be completed no later than June 30, 2013.
- (5) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.
- (6) CLC RR must notify the Commission on completion of the upgrades authorized in this Order. Acceptance of the upgrades is subject to inspection by Commission Staff, and verification that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified in this Order.

The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 03 in Docket A-090485. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective December 6, 2012.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION



DAVID W. DANNER, Executive Director and Secretary

**NOTICE:** This is an order delegated to the Secretary for decision. In addition to serving you a copy of the decision, the Commission will post on its Internet Web site for at least

fourteen (14) days a listing of all matters delegated to the Secretary for decision. You may seek Commission review of this decision. You must file a request for Commission review of this order no later than fourteen (14) days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's Web site. The Commission will schedule your request for review for consideration at a regularly scheduled open meeting. The Commission will notify you of the time and place of the open meeting at which the Commission will review the order.

The Commission will grant a late-filed request for review only on a showing of good cause, including a satisfactory explanation of why the person did not timely file the request. A form for late-filed requests is available on the Commission's Web site.

This notice and review process is pursuant to the provisions of RCW 80.01.030 and WAC 480-07-904(2) and (3).