

Service Date: September 11, 2025

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION,

Petitioner,

WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION; SPOKANE,  
SPANGLE & PALOUSE RAILWAY,  
LLC,

Respondents.

DOCKET TR-250599

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY  
A RAILROAD-HIGHWAY GRADE  
CROSSING AT STATE ROUTE 27,  
OAKESDALE

USDOT: 058580G

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On August 11, 2025, the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition (Petition) seeking approval to modify a public railroad-highway grade crossing at the intersection of State Route 27 (SR-27) and the Palouse and Lewiston Branch (P&L Branch) of the Palouse River and Coulee City Rail System (PCC) in Oakesdale, identified as USDOT 058580G. WSDOT owns the PCC and contracts with Spokane, Spangle, & Palouse Railway, LLC (SS&P), to operate the P&L Branch. WSDOT is also the highway authority with responsibility for SR-27.
- 2 Respondents WSDOT and SS&P consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 SR-27 is a two-lane state rural highway with a posted vehicle speed limit of 25 miles per hour. Average annual daily traffic through the crossing is 1,360 vehicles. SR-27 is part of an established truck route with approximately 10 percent commercial vehicle traffic and is part of an established school bus route with six school buses using the crossing each school day.

- 4 Warning devices at the SR-27 crossing consist of advance warning signs, roadway markings, reflectorized crossbucks, mast-mounted flashing lights and gates, a pedestrian bell, and Emergency Notification System signs. Up to two freight trains per day operate at up to 10 miles per hour through this crossing. No passenger trains operate at this location.
- 5 The railroad tracks intersect the SR-27 crossing at an acute angle of less than 60 degrees. WSDOT proposes to realign 70 feet of existing sidewalk along the east side of SR-27 to reduce the skew of the sidewalk to improve safety for pedestrian and bicycle traffic. This project is part of WSDOT's 2025 CRISI Rural Rail Rehabilitation project and is funded with state and federal funds.
- 6 Pursuant to the procedure specified in RCW 81.53.060, Commission staff (Staff) arranged for publication of a legal notice in the Spokane Spokesman-Review, a newspaper of general circulation in the Spokane area. The notice directed any person wishing to comment on the Petition to respond in writing to the Commission. The Commission did not receive comments or objections regarding the proposed crossing modifications within the comment period.
- 7 According to the Petition, the parties have reached an understanding related to costs for the project and do not require the Commission to apportion costs.
- 8 Staff investigated the Petition and recommended that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) the project must conform to the description in the Petition, (2) WSDOT must complete the proposed modifications within three years, and (3) upon completion of the project authorized herein, WSDOT must notify the Commission within 60 days. Acceptance is subject to inspection by Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

## **DISCUSSION**

- 9 RCW 81.53.060 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modification of a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. We find that the proposed modifications will improve safety, mobility, and convenience for crossing users. Accordingly, the Commission grants the Petition subject to the conditions that Staff recommends.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 10 (1) The Commission is an agency of the State of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 11 (2) The SR-27 crossing, identified as USDOT 058580G, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 12 (3) RCW 81.53.060 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. See also WAC 480-62-150.
- 13 (4) Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions set out in paragraph 8, above.
- 14 (5) This matter came before the Commission at its regularly scheduled open meeting on September 11, 2025.
- 15 (6) After examination of the Petition filed by WSDOT on August 11, 2025, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the Petition.

**O R D E R**

**THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 16 The Washington State Department of Transportation's Petition to modify a public highway-rail grade crossing located at the intersection of SR-27 and the Spokane, Spangle & Palouse Railway, LLC, track in Oakesdale is granted. Approval of the Petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The project must conform to the description in the Petition.
  - (2) The Washington State Department of Transportation must complete the proposed modifications within three years.
  - (3) Upon completion of the project authorized herein, the Washington State Department of Transportation must notify the Commission

within 60 days. Acceptance is subject to inspection by Staff, verifying that the crossing is in full compliance with applicable laws, regulations, and the conditions specified herein.

The Commissioners, having determined this Order to be consistent with the public interest, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective September 11, 2025.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

JEFF KILLIP,  
Executive Director and Secretary