

- 4 Petitioner maintains one branch-line track through the crossing. Average daily train traffic includes two freight trains traveling at a maximum speed of 40 mph.
- 5 Warning devices at the crossing consist of standard crossbuck and advance warning signs. Petitioner proposes to install shoulder-mounted signals with gates at the crossing. The proposal is related to a plan by the City of Sedro-Woolley and the Washington State Department of Transportation to install a highway traffic signal at the SR-20/Rhodes Road intersection. Whenever a signalized roadway intersection is located near a railroad-highway grade crossing, the possibility exists that vehicle queues may back up over the railroad tracks when the highway signal displays a red light. Motorists that are stopped on the tracks are in danger of being trapped in the event that a train is approaching the crossing. The proximity of the SR-20/Rhodes Road intersection to the Rhodes Road grade crossing (45 feet) suggests that the likelihood of vehicles stopping on the tracks is high, especially during peak hours and when long wheel-base vehicles use the crossing. The installation of active warning signals at the crossing addresses this problem by allowing for the interconnection of the railroad warning system with the highway traffic signals. When the signals are interconnected, activation of the railroad warning signals by an approaching train will preempt the highway traffic signals, causing them to display a green light to clear vehicle queues originating from the roadway intersection and extending back over the tracks. While the queue is being cleared, the proposed railroad warning signals and gates will prevent more vehicles from entering the grade crossing.

FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 6 (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. *Chapter 81.53 RCW.*

- 7 (2) The Rhodes Road grade crossing, designated as USDOT 085005U, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 8 (3) RCW 81.53.261 and WAC 480-62-150(2)(a)(e) require that the Commission grant approval prior to upgrading or interconnecting warning devices at public railroad-highway grade crossings within the State of Washington.
- 9 (4) Commission Staff investigated the petition and recommended that it be granted, subject to specified conditions.
- 10 (5) This matter was brought before the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on March 12, 2003.
- 11 (6) After examination of the petition filed by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company on January 30, 2003, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 12 The petition of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company for upgrading and interconnecting warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at the intersection of Rhodes Road and the petitioner's tracks, in Sedro-Woolley, Washington, is granted, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The upgrades must conform to the plans filed in this proceeding.
 - (2) Traffic control devices must comply with applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*.

- (3) Traffic control devices and instrument housing must be installed in such a manner as to provide required clearances for both rail and vehicular traffic.
- (4) The Washington State Department of Transportation must ensure that the timing of each railroad preemption phase for the highway traffic signal is sufficient to clear vehicle queues that may extend from the SR-20/Rhodes Road roadway intersection back over the railroad tracks, as determined by an engineering analysis.
- (5) Upon completion of the upgrades authorized herein, petitioner must notify the Commission. Acceptance of the installations is subject to a compliance inspection by Commission Staff, verifying that the changes are in full compliance with law, regulation, and the conditions specified herein.

The Commissioners, having determined that this filing complies with the requirements of RCW 81.53.261, directed the Secretary to enter this Order.

DATED at Olympia, Washington, and effective this 12th day of March, 2003.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

CAROLE J. WASHBURN, Secretary