

**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; WASHINGTON
EASTERN RAILROAD, LLC,

Respondents.

DOCKET TR-250347

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY
A RAILROAD-HIGHWAY GRADE
CROSSING AT STATE ROUTE 904,
CHENEY

USDOT: 066317B

BACKGROUND

- 1 On May 15, 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 904 (SR-904) and the Central Washington (CW) branch of the Palouse River and Coulee City Rail System (PCC) in Cheney, identified as USDOT 066317B. WSDOT owns the PCC and contracts with Washington Eastern Railroad, LLC (Washington Eastern), to operate the CW branch.
- 2 Respondents WSDOT and Washington Eastern consented to entry of an Order by the Commission without further notice or hearing.
- 3 SR-904 is a four-lane state highway with a posted vehicle speed limit of 45 miles per hour. Average annual daily traffic through the crossing is 8,500 vehicles. SR-904 is part of an established commercial vehicle route with approximately 10 percent commercial vehicle traffic and is part of an established school bus route with 10 school buses using the crossing each school day.
- 4 Warning devices at the SR-904 crossing consist of advance warning signs, roadway markings, reflectorized crossbucks, Emergency Notification System signs, a pedestrian warning bell, gates, and mast and cantilever-mounted LED warning lights. 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 SR-904 and the Washington Eastern track intersect at an acute angle of less than 30 degrees. WSDOT proposes to realign 100 feet of sidewalk along the east side of SR-904 to reduce the skew of the sidewalk and create a more suitable and safer crossing angle for pedestrians and bicyclists. This project is part of WSDOT's 2025 Rural Rail Rehabilitation Project funded by a federal Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements grant.
- 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 an understanding related to costs for the project and do not require the Commission to apportion costs.
- 8 Staff has investigated the Petition and recommends 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-904 crossing, identified as USDOT 066317B, 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 June 12, 2025.
- 15 (6) After examination of the Petition filed by WSDOT on May 15, 2025, and giving consideration to all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the Petition.

ORDER

THE COMMISSION ORDERS:

- 16 (1) The Washington State Department of Transportation's Petition to modify a public highway-rail grade crossing located at the intersection of SR-904 and the Washington Eastern Railroad, LLC's track in Cheney is granted. Approval of the Petition is subject to the following conditions:
- (a) The project must conform to the description in the Petition.
 - (b) The Washington State Department of Transportation must complete the proposed modifications within three years.
 - (c) 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.

- 17 (2) 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 June 12, 2025.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

JEFF KILLIP,
Executive Director and Secretary