

**BEFORE THE WASHINGTON  
UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**

In the Matter of the Petition of

SPOKANE COUNTY,

Petitioner,

WASHINGTON EASTERN RAILROAD  
LLC; WASHINGTON STATE  
DEPARTMENT OF  
TRANSPORTATION,

Respondents.

DOCKET TR-260060

ORDER 01

GRANTING PETITION TO MODIFY  
WARNING DEVICES AT A PUBLIC  
HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE  
CROSSING AT COULEE-HITE  
ROAD, REARDAN

USDOT: 066351H

**BACKGROUND**

- 1 On January 22, 2026, Spokane County (County or Petitioner) filed with the Washington Utilities and Transportation Commission (Commission) a petition (Petition) seeking approval to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at the intersection of Coulee-Hite Road and Washington Eastern Railroad, LLC’s (Washington Eastern) tracks near Reardan, identified as USDOT 066351H. This rail line is owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT) and operated by Washington Eastern under a lease agreement.
- 2 Respondents Washington Eastern and WSDOT consented to entry of a Commission order without hearing.
- 3 Coulee-Hite Road is a two-lane rural major collector roadway with a posted vehicle speed limit of 45 miles per hour. The estimated average annual daily traffic at this location is 365 vehicles. Coulee-Hite Road is part of an established commercial vehicle route with 20 percent commercial traffic and is part of an established school bus route with up to 14 school buses using the crossing on school days. One freight train typically operates over this line daily at up to 10 miles per hour. No passenger trains operate over this crossing.
- 4 Warning devices at the crossing consist of advance warning signs, pavement markings, yield signs, reflectorized crossbucks, and Emergency Notification System (ENS) signs.

- 5 According to its Petition, the County intends to install active warning devices consisting of two pairs of mast-mounted flashing warning lights for the northbound approach and three pairs for the southbound approach that includes an intersecting access road for the Hite grain elevator, gates, and a bell. The project also includes new advance warning signs and pavement marking, crossbucks, ENS signs, asphalt approaches and concrete crossing surface panels, and reconstruction of the track through the crossing. In describing the public safety need for the modifications to the crossing, the County states that rail cars can block the crossing, sometimes during hours of darkness or in foggy conditions, when loading grain at the adjacent grain elevator. The addition of active warning devices will improve safety at the crossing by warning approaching motorists of a train either approaching or occupying the crossing.
- 6 According to the Petition, the parties have reached an agreement related to the apportionment of costs for the proposed upgrades.
- 7 Commission staff (Staff) has investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted subject to the following conditions: (1) the modifications must conform to those described in and attached to the Petition, (2) traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, (3) the County must complete the proposed modifications within five years, and (4) the County must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein. Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with the conditions specified herein.

### **DISCUSSION**

- 8 Revised Code of Washington (RCW) 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. When the Commission directs the installation of warning devices, it will apportion installation and maintenance costs in accordance with the applicable statutes.<sup>1</sup> RCW 81.53.261 provides that the parties may enter into an agreement providing for the installation of signals or other warning devices or for the apportionment of the cost of installation and maintenance. The parties to this Petition confirmed that they have reached an agreement related to cost apportionment. Accordingly, the Commission grants the Petition subject to the conditions that Staff recommends.

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<sup>1</sup> See RCW 81.53.261–295.

**FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS**

- 9 (1) The Commission is an agency of the state of Washington having jurisdiction over public railroad-highway grade crossings within the state of Washington.
- 10 (2) The Coulee-Hite Road crossing, identified as USDOT 066315H, is a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington.
- 11 (3) RCW 81.53.261 requires that the Commission grant approval prior to modifying a public railroad-highway grade crossing within the state of Washington. See also Washington Administrative Code (WAC) 480-62-150.
- 12 (4) Staff investigated the Petition and recommends that it be granted with the conditions set out in paragraph 7, above.
- 13 (5) After examining the Petition filed by Spokane County on January 22, 2026, and considering all relevant matters and for good cause shown, the Commission grants the Petition.

**ORDER**

**THE COMMISSION ORDERS:**

- 14 Spokane County's Petition to modify warning devices at a railroad-highway grade crossing located at Coulee-Hite Road is granted, and the parties are directed to proceed with the modifications described in the Petition, subject to the following conditions:
- (1) The modifications must conform to those described in and attached to the Petition.
- (2) Traffic control devices must comply with all applicable standards specified in the U.S. Department of Transportation Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.
- (3) Spokane County must complete the modifications within five years of the effective date of this Order.
- (4) Spokane County must notify the Commission within 60 days upon completion of the modifications authorized herein.
- (5) Acceptance of the changes is subject to inspection by Staff, who will verify that the crossing is in full compliance with the conditions specified herein.

- 15 The Secretary of the Commission has delegated authority over this matter pursuant to Order 01 in Docket A-180762. The Secretary finds this Order to be consistent with the public interest.

DATED at Lacey, Washington, and effective February 10, 2026.

WASHINGTON UTILITIES AND TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION

  
JEFF KILLIP

Executive Director and Secretary

**NOTICE TO PARTIES: This is an order delegated to the Executive Secretary for decision. As authorized in WAC 480-07-904(3), you must file any request for Commission review of this order no later than 14 days after the date the decision is posted on the Commission's website.**