

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

320 W 4th Street, Suite 500  
Los Angeles, CA 90013



September 10, 2021

CORS 2021090001

Brian Balderrama  
Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority  
Deputy Executive Officer  
One Gateway Plaza, M/S 99-17-2  
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

**September 10 2021**

**STATE CLEARINGHOUSE**

**Sent via email: [AVL@metro.net](mailto:AVL@metro.net)**

**Re: Antelope Valley Line Capacity and Service Improvements Program  
SCH 2020109001 — *Draft Environmental Impact Report***

Dear Mr. Balderrama:

The California Public Utilities Commission (Commission/CPUC) has jurisdiction over rail crossings (crossings) in California. CPUC ensures that crossings are safely designed, constructed, and maintained. The Commission's Rail Crossings Engineering Branch (RCEB) is in receipt of the *Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR)* for the proposed Antelope Valley Line Capacity and Service Improvements Program (Project). Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) is the lead agency. The Project is statutorily exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) under Section 21080 (b)(10) of the California Public Resources Code (PRC); the DEIR has been provided as an informational document to identify potential impacts that may result from the Project.

The Antelope Valley Line (AVL) right-of-way (ROW) is owned by Metro. Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) operates Metrolink commuter rail service between Los Angeles Union Station and Lancaster and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) operates Class 1 freight service along the corridor. The route is Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) Track Class 4, with a maximum speed of 79 miles per hour (mph). There are up to 30 Metrolink commuter trains and on average five UPRR freight trains per day on the AVL.

The Project involves the construction of three capital improvements which would provide the capacity required to allow commuter rail service to increase along the AVL to 30-minute bi-directional headways between Los Angeles Union Station (LAUS) and the Santa Clarita Valley and up to 60-minute bi-directional headways between the Santa Clarita Valley and the Lancaster Terminal by the year 2028. The three capital improvements, described in DEIR Section 2.3, include the Balboa Double Track Extension located in the City of Los Angeles, the Canyon Siding Extension located in the City of Santa Clarita, and the Lancaster Terminal Improvements located in the City of Lancaster.

CPUC General Order (G.O.) 88-B establishes criteria for altering existing crossings, including (but not limited to) addition of one track within the existing railroad right-of-way, reconstruction of grade-separated structures, and changes in the type or addition of automatic signaling devices at crossings. Metro will be required to submit a G.O. 88-B request for alteration of each existing crossing included in

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the Project. Requests to alter existing crossings may be approved by RCEB staff, provided completion of request as outlined in G.O. 88-B, Section 5 and consensus among parties.

G.O. 88-B also establishes cases for which the Authority must apply to the Commission for authorization, including construction of new highway-rail or rail-rail crossings. Refer to the CPUC Rules of Practice and Procedure ([www.cpuc.ca.gov/rpp/](http://www.cpuc.ca.gov/rpp/)), Rules 3.7–3.11 for new crossing application requirements. You may consult with RCEB staff to determine the need for authorization by G.O. 88-B or by application at each proposed crossing on the corridor.

Minimum vertical and horizontal clearance requirements are outlined in CPUC General Order (G.O.) 26-D, Section 2, Section 3, and Section 4. Clearance between parallel tracks is governed by G.O. 26-D, Section 5. Public roads, highways, and streets crossing under tracks and over tracks are subject to G.O. 26-D, Section 12 and Section 13, respectively.

A diagnostic meeting is required for each crossing alteration or construction. The diagnostic team consists of representatives from the railroads, roadway agencies, local government agencies, CPUC, and private stakeholders. You may contact RCEB staff to schedule diagnostic meetings, and to discuss preliminary designs of grade-separated structures.

Metro has initiated coordination meetings with CPUC RCEB and presented an overview of the three capital improvements within the Project. RCEB provides the following comments for each capital improvement.

### **Balboa Double Track**

The Balboa Double Track Extension is proposed to begin at the existing Sylmar Siding at the Balboa Boulevard overpass and extend approximately 1.1 miles north to the Sierra Highway overpass, and includes three existing grade-separated. CPUC G.O. 26-D establishes minimum vertical and horizontal clearance requirements, though railroads standards may exceed these clearances.

### **Canyon Siding Extension**

The proposed Canyon Siding Extension would add approximately 8,400 feet of new track between Bouquet Canyon and Golden Oak Road. The improvement includes proposed new crossings at Santa Clarita station and modification of the Golden Oak Road grade crossing.

New pedestrian grade crossings are proposed at Santa Clarita Station. The Commission's policy is to reduce the number of at-grade crossings, per G.O. 75-D. As such, CPUC recommends that Metro move forward with the undercrossing design alternatives. New public crossings require an application to the Commission; refer to the CPUC Rules of Practice and Procedure for details.

The proposed modification of the Golden Oak Road grade crossing will require CPUC authorization. This may be accomplished by G.O. 88-B request. Please contact CPUC to schedule a field diagnostic meeting with all stakeholders at the crossing.

### **Lancaster Terminal Improvements**

The proposed Lancaster Terminal Improvements includes expansion of the existing layover facilities north of Lancaster Station and the Lancaster Boulevard crossing, with three additional storage tracks. CPUC supports the respective pedestrian undercrossing and pedestrian overcrossing design alternatives at Lancaster Station. The proposed modification of the Lancaster Boulevard grade crossing will require CPUC authorization.

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Please continue to keep RCEB informed of the project's development. If you have any questions or require clarification on CPUC's role in rail crossings projects, you may contact Matthew Cervantes at [matthew.cervantes@cpuc.ca.gov](mailto:matthew.cervantes@cpuc.ca.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Matt Cervantes', written in a cursive style.

Matthew Cervantes, PE  
Senior Utilities Engineer  
Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch  
Rail Safety Division

CC: State Clearinghouse, [state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov](mailto:state.clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov)  
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