

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

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August 31, 2020

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Mark A. McLoughlin
California High-Speed Rail Authority
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8/31/2020

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

Sep 01 2020

Sent by email to: Burbank_Los.Angeles@hsr.ca.gov

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

**Re: California High-Speed Rail – Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section
SCH 2014071073 — *Draft Environmental Impact Report***

Dear Mr. McLoughlin:

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 California High-Speed Rail – Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section. California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is the lead agency.

The Burbank to Los Angeles Project Section will provide a High-Speed Rail (HSR) connection from the Burbank Airport Station in Burbank to Los Angeles Union Station in Los Angeles. The approximately 14-mile project section will travel through the City of Burbank, City of Glendale, as well as communities in the City of Los Angeles within an existing railroad corridor. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (Metro) owns the existing right-of-way (ROW), the Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) owns the existing tracks and operates Metrolink commuter rail service, the National Railroad Passenger Corporation (Amtrak) provides intercity passenger service on the existing track, and Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) holds track access rights and operates freight rail within the corridor.

CPUC General Orders set forth regulations governing construction and design for new crossings or alteration of existing crossings. As such, DEIR Table 2-D-1: Transportation (of Appendix 2-D: Applicable Design Standard) should include CPUC General Orders under Applicable Design Standards for alteration of existing state and local roadways.

CPUC General Order (G.O.) 88-B establishes criteria for altering existing crossings, including roadway realignment, reconstruction of grade-separated structures, and construction of a grade-separated structure that eliminates an existing grade crossing. The Authority will be required to submit a G.O. 88-B request for alteration of each existing crossing on the corridor, unless an application to the Commission is required. 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. Roadways closed at the HSR corridor may require G.O. 88-B authorization if a nearby grade crossing remains in place. Under Commission G.O. 75-D, CPUC shall be notified of the closure of any existing crossings.

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/), Rule 3.9 Railroad Across Public Road and Rule 3.10 Railroad Across Railroad, 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.

DEIR Section 2.3.4 Infrastructure Components and Section 2.3.5 Grade Separations detail proposed typical cross-sections with minimum clearances. All grade-separated structures, including rail-rail structures, are subject to

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minimum vertical and horizontal clearance requirements outlined in Commission 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. The overhead contact system (OCS) powering the HSR is subject to clearance requirements stated in G.O. 95 and G.O. 176. Construction and maintenance of walkways adjacent to track is subject to Commission G.O. 118-A, which details standards for vegetation abatement, surface materials, slope, track clearance, and width. G. O. 72-B details the rules governing the construction and maintenance of crossings at grade of railroads with public streets, roads, and highways.

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. Section 3.2.7 Mitigation Measures includes considerations for changes to traffic signal operations and roadway alignments during construction, including existing highway-rail crossings approaches. Such alterations to crossing roadway approaches and traffic signal phasing or preemption timing require CPUC review and may require G.O 88-B authorization prior to implementation.

Appendix 2-A: Roadway Crossings, Table 2-A-1 lists proposed roadway crossings of high-speed rail, modifications, and closures. According to G.O. 75-D, Section 2, CPUC's policy is to reduce the number of at-grade crossings of freight and passenger railroad mainlines. RCEB recommends the entire HSR corridor be grade separated with no at-grade highway-rail crossings. Grade separated crossings provide a greater level of safety, for both the roadway users as well as railroad employees, than at-grade highway-rail crossings.

CPUC supports closure of the private LADWP road crossing south of Main Street in the City of Los Angeles. Closure of Chevy Chase Drive to vehicles should be coordinated through a CPUC application process with the opening of the new Goodwin Avenue undercrossing, and construction of the pedestrian underpass at Chevy Chase Drive. Modifications of existing grade-separated crossings will require review and authorization by RCEB staff pursuant to G.O. 88-B, including the Salem/Sperry St planned crossing as noted in Appendix 2-A. Elimination of grade crossings at Sonora Avenue, Grand Avenue, and Flower Street through grade separation is subject to CPUC authorization by G.O. 88-B, where exempt from CEQA pursuant to PR Code Section 21080.13. Modifications of the Buena Vista Street crossing are currently shown with the Metrolink/UPRR tracks remaining at-grade. Strong consideration should be given to grade-separating the entire crossing. All modifications will require CPUC authorization.

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 Matt Cervantes at matthew.cervantes@cpuc.ca.gov.

Sincerely,



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

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