
Key Highlights:

The CPUC has safety oversight responsibility for approximately 13,250 public and 3250 private rail crossings, of which 10,000 are at-grade (the rail and road are at the same level)

RAIL CROSSING SAFETY

EVALUATING CROSSING APPLICATIONS AND MODIFICATION REQUESTS

CPUC has seen an increase in the number of new crossing applications and modification requests it receives. Primary factors driving the increase are 1) The implementation of the 2006 Bond Act; 2) The availability of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds; 3) Transit system expansions and line extensions; and 4) Specific local and regional transportation initiatives approved by voters, all of which fund many current transportation projects.

RAIL CORRIDOR SAFETY ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM

The CPUC continues to develop and refine its rail corridor safety enhancement program. When development projects are proposed along rail corridors, the CPUC provides in -depth technical analysis of environmental review documents under CEQA and makes efforts to eliminate or mitigate any potential rail safety impacts generated by the proposed development. Reviewing rail crossing impacts while development projects are still in the planning stages allows the CPUC to be proactive in seeking corrective measures for crossings and rail corridors, rather than reactive after an incident has occurred.

HIGHWAY-RAIL GRADE CROSSING ACTION PLAN

California was identified in the Rail Safety Improvement Act of 2008 as one of the 10 states with the most grade crossing collisions in the prior three years. As such, California was required to develop an action plan to identify specific solutions for improving safety at crossings. Due to its jurisdiction over railroad and rail transit crossings within California, the CPUC took the lead in developing the resulting action plan. The plan outlines the current state of rail crossing safety in California and the federal, state, and local agency roles and responsibilities relating to improving safety. The action plan outlines the significant investments made by the state to construct grade separation structures as a way to eliminate existing crossings and to improve existing at -grade crossings to eliminate hazards. It also outlines several new strategies to improve crossing safety. The CPUC submitted the action plan to the Federal Railroad Administration for comment, made revisions, and will adopt a final plan.

RAILROAD SAFETY AND SECURITY INFORMATION MANAGEMENT SYSTEM - RSSIMS

In 2014, the CPUC's rail safety programs completed the first full year of using the RSSIMS database application. The system provides a central resource to manage rail safety data and documents. It is used by over 90 rail staff that work with rail safety. It is a primary resource for some core business processes related to rail crossing safety, such as accident/incident reviews and highway-rail crossing inventory.

HIGHLIGHTS OF SAFETY/ CROSS CUTTING PROCEEDINGS FOR 2015

Looking Ahead In Rail Crossing Safety: In 2015 the CPUC's Rail Crossings and Engineering Branch (RCEB), in addition to its routine work, is taking on the task of being lead to manage a multi-year rail crossing surveying project which will include (1) surveying of all public "at-grade railroad-highway crossings" throughout the state, and (2) entering of data information gathered by the survey to that database.

Another goal is to manage a rail crossings “Stop and Yield” project which will include (1) Verifying of existing signage and pavement markings, (2) Measuring corner sight distance in all four quadrants, (3) Photos of current conditions, (4) Stop sign or full STOP warrant evaluation, if no sign present and certain metrics are met. This may include detailed traffic counts and/or additional data gathered from the local agency staff, etc.

RCEB looks forward to undertaking a revision of the Commission’s General Orders (GO) 75 -D and 88-B. The GOs need to be updated and some sections clarified. Additionally, RCEB will draft and propose legislation to clarify the CPUC role and specific requirements for silencing train horns at private and pedestrian -only crossings, which are not subject to the FRA quiet zone rules.

RCEB will continue working with the railroads in California to evaluate preempted crossings, and pursue the other activities outlined in its Crossing Safety Action Plan. The preemption goal for 2015 is to finalize a policy that will help all parties understand the new preemption criteria and assure that railroads and local agencies can implement and maintain preemption systems to improve safety at highway -rail crossings.

LIST OF ACTIVE AND REOPENED PROCEEDINGS AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2014

PROCEEDING NUMBER	FILED DATE	DESCRIPTION	STATUS	UTILITY	
73	A1108004	02-AUG-2011	CITY OF SAN CLEMENTE - FOR AN ORDER AUTHORIZING THE ALTERATION AND IMPROVEMENT OF SEVEN EXISTING SAN CLEMENTE BEACH TRAIL AT-GRADE CROSSINGS	ACTIVE	Railroad/Grade Crossings
146	I1306014	27-JUN-2013	CPUC - OII TO ESTABLISHING A LIST FOR YRS 2014-15 AND 2015-16 OF EXISTING CROSSINGS OF CITY STREETS, COUNTY ROAD OR STATE HIGHWAYS IN NEED OF SEPARATION, ALTERATIONS OR RECONSTRUCTION	ACTIVE	Railroad/Grade Crossings
150	C1308011	05-AUG-2013	FLETCHER VS UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD - FOR AN ORDER THAT DEFENDANT PROVIDE A SAFE CROSSING AT THE EXISTING PRIVATE CROSSING	ACTIVE	Railroad/Grade Crossings
162	A1309020	23-SEP-2013	SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT - COST ALLOCATION FOR REQUIRED IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING INSTALLATION OF QUADRANT GATES AT A PRIVATE CROSSING	ACTIVE	Railroad/Grade Crossings
167	C1310008	10-OCT-2013	DRY CREEK RANCHERIA BAND OF POMO INDIANS VS SONOMA-MARIN AREA RAIL TRANSIT DISTRICT AND NORTH COAST RAILROAD AUTHORITY - FOR DEFENDANTS TO ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN SAFE RAILROAD CROSSING AT THEIR EXPENSE	ACTIVE	Railroad/Grade Crossings