

PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Consumer Protection & Safety Division
Rail Safety & Crossings Branch
Rail Crossings Engineering Section

RESOLUTION SX-58

Date: _____

RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION SX-58 GRANTING AUTHORITY TO THE LOS ANGELES COUNTY METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION AUTHORITY TO DEVIATE FROM THE REQUIREMENTS OF SECTION 7.8 OF GENERAL ORDER 75-C BY MODIFYING THE AUDIBLE COMPONENT ON AUTOMATIC RAILROAD CROSSING WARNING DEVICES AT SEVEN AT-GRADE HIGHWAY-RAIL CROSSINGS OF THE LOS ANGELES TO PASADENA METRO GOLD LINE LIGHT RAIL LINE, IN CITIES OF LOS ANGELES AND SOUTH PASADENA, COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES.

Summary

Pursuant to Section 12.1 of General Order (GO) 75-C, the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA), by letter dated July 14, 2003, requests authority to deviate from Section 7.8 of GO 75-C, which requires that railroad crossing warning devices during operation be accompanied by the sounding of bells. LACMTA proposes to shorten the duration in which the bells are sounded by silencing them when the warning device gate arms are in the horizontal position. The deviation would apply to seven at-grade highway-rail crossings on the Los Angeles to Pasadena Gold Line (Gold Line) in the cities of Los Angeles and South Pasadena, Los Angeles County. This resolution grants authority for the requested deviation.

Background

Pursuant to § 130050.20 of the Pub. Util. Code, the California Legislature created LACMTA on April 1, 1993 as the successor agency to the Southern California Rapid Transit District and the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission. LACMTA is the primary provider of transit-related services for the Southern

California region, and it funds and operates an extensive bus network and light rail systems including the Gold Line.

Section 7.8 of GO 75-C states: “Except as otherwise provided, signals shall display a danger warning in both directions along the highway. Unless omitted by the Commission, the warning aspect shall be accompanied by the sound of a bell.”

Section 12.1 of GO 75-C states: “If, in a particular case, exemption from any of the requirements herein is desired, the Commission will consider the application for such exemption when accompanied by a full statement of the conditions existing and the reasons why such exemption is asked. It is to be understood that any exemption so granted shall be limited to the particular case covered by the application.”

Discussion

Railroad crossing warning devices are designed such that when the train detection circuitry is activated, the flashing light signals and bells on the warning devices begin to operate. Approximately three seconds afterwards, the automatic gate arms start descending. After the train clears the crossing, the gate arms ascend and the bells and flashing light signals are deactivated. LACMTA requests authority to reduce the amount of noise generated by the bells on the warning devices by silencing the bells when the gate arms are in horizontal position.

The Gold Line operates 22 hours a day, from 4 am to 2 am, seven days a week, with train movements at each crossing every 5 minutes during peak hours. LACMTA started testing of the Gold Line on a 22-hour basis prior to its official opening on July 26, 2003, and immediately residents started complaining about the noise generated by the bells.

The Commission’s Consumer Protection and Safety Division (CPSD) and LACMTA held diagnostic meetings at every single at-grade crossing on the Gold Line to select the crossings where the sounding of the bells could be modified. Factors considered included the proximity of residences and the amount of pedestrian traffic at each crossing. Based on the diagnostic meetings, seven crossings were identified as possible candidates. LACMTA is requesting to modify the sounding of the bells at these crossings, which are listed in Appendix A of this resolution.

CPSD reviewed LACMTA's request and supports granting the deviation with the following conditions:

- If CPSD determines that light rail vehicle (LRV) involved collisions, or near collisions, at the crossing are caused as a result of the authority granted by this resolution, then CPSD Director has the power to rescind the authority granted by this resolution;
- LACMTA shall not modify the number, type, and functionality of the Commission Standard warning devices at the crossings without prior Commission approval; and
- The LRV operators shall sound an audible warning device when approaching the crossing, as currently required by Section 7.09 of GO 143-B.

This is an uncontested matter in which the decision grants the relief requested. Pursuant to Pub. Util. Code § 311(g)(2), the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comments is being waived.

Findings

1. Pursuant to Section 12.1 of GO 75-C, LACMTA requests authority to deviate from Section 7.8 of GO 75-C, which requires that railroad crossing warning devices during operation be accompanied by the sounding of bells.
2. LACMTA proposes to shorten the duration in which the bells sound by silencing them when the warning device gate arms are in the horizontal position.
3. The Gold Line operates 22 hours a day, from 4 a.m. to 2 a.m., seven days a week. Cities of South Pasadena and Los Angeles have informed CPSD that residents have complained about the noise from the bells on the warning devices.
4. CPSD reviewed LACMTA's request and supports the deviation providing the safety of the crossings will not be jeopardized and certain conditions regarding the design and operation of the crossings remain in effect.
5. CPSD recommends that this resolution be adopted.

Therefore, IT IS ORDERED that:

1. The Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority (LACMTA) is authorized to deviate from Section 7.8 of General Order (GO) 75-C, by shortening the duration in which the bells are sounded on its Commission Standard No. 9 (flashing light signals with automatic gate, as described in GO 75-C) warning devices, by silencing the bells when the gate arms reach the horizontal position, at seven at-grade highway-rail crossings listed in Appendix A of this resolution, in cities of South Pasadena and Los Angeles, in Los Angeles County.
2. The Commission's Consumer Protection and Safety Division's Director (CPSD) is delegated the power to rescind the authority granted by this resolution under the following conditions:
 - a. If CPSD determines that light rail vehicle (LRV) involved collisions, or near collisions, at the crossing are caused as a result of the authority granted by this resolution.
 - b. If LACMTA modifies the number, type, and functionality of the Commission standard warning devices at the crossings without prior Commission approval.

- c. If the LRV operators do not sound an audible warning device when approaching the crossing, as required by Section 7.09 of GO 143-B.

This resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted by the Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on _____. The following Commissioners voted favorably thereon:

WILLIAM AHERN
Executive Director

APPENDIX A
LIST OF CROSSINGS
SUBJECT OF THIS RESOLUTION

Crossing Number	Street Name	City
84P-7.44	Freemont Ave/ Grevelia St	South Pasadena
84P-7.23	Hope St	South Pasadena
84P-6.81	Orange Grove Ave	South Pasadena
84P-6.59	Indiana Ave	South Pasadena
84P-5.98	Arroyo Verde Rd	South Pasadena
84P-5.08	Ave 60	Los Angeles
84P-5.02	Ave 59	Los Angeles