

Decision 05-05-035 May 26, 2005

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

Fernando Hernandez doing business as The Desert Ruby for authority to operate as a on-call passenger stage corporation between points in The City of Palm Springs and The Coachella Valley; and establish a Zone of Rate Freedom.

Application 03-09-037
(Filed September 23, 2003)

O P I N I O N

Summary

This decision grants the application of Fernando Hernandez (Applicant), an individual, pursuant to Pub. Util. Code § 1031 et seq., for a certificate of public convenience and necessity to operate as a passenger stage corporation (PSC), as defined in Pub. Util. Code § 226, and to establish a zone of rate freedom (ZORF) pursuant to Pub. Util. Code § 454.2.

Discussion

The application, as amended by letters dated December 13, 2003 and March 28, 2005, requests authority to operate as an on-call PSC to transport passengers and their baggage between hotels and motels in Palm Springs, on the one hand, and points in the Cities of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, and La Quinta, on the other hand. The service will accommodate tourists staying in Palm Springs who wish to visit other cities and tourist attractions in the Coachella Valley.

Applicant will operate one 15-pasenger van. His unaudited balance sheet discloses assets of \$36,640, liabilities of \$33,000, and net worth of \$3,640.

The proposed fares range between \$8 and \$15. Applicant requests authority to establish a ZORF of \$5 above and below the proposed fares. He will compete with other PSCs, taxicabs, limousines, public transit, and private automobiles in his service area. This highly competitive environment should result in Applicant pricing his services at a reasonable level. Many other PSCs have been granted ZORFs. The requested ZORF is generally consistent with the ZORFs held by other PSCs.

Notice of filing of the application appeared in the Commission's Daily Calendar on September 24, 2003. Applicant served a notice of the application to the involved cities, Palm Springs Airport, and Sunline Transit, the public transit operator in the Coachella Valley.

In Resolution ALJ 176-3130 dated October 2, 2003, the Commission preliminarily categorized this application as ratesetting, and preliminarily determined that hearings were not necessary. No protest has been received. Given this status, public hearing is not necessary, and it is not necessary to alter the preliminary determinations made in Resolution ALJ 176-3130.

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

Assignment of Proceeding

Richard Clark is the assigned Examiner in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. Applicant requests authority to operate as an on-call PSC to transport passengers and their baggage between hotels and motels in Palm Springs, on the one hand, and points in Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, and La Quinta, on the other hand.

2. Public convenience and necessity requires the proposed service.
3. Applicant requests authority to establish a ZORF of \$5 above and below the proposed fares set forth in the application.
4. Applicant will compete with PSCs, taxicabs, limousines, public transit, and private automobiles in his operations. The ZORF is fair and reasonable.
5. No protest to the application has been filed.
6. A public hearing is not necessary.
7. It can be seen with certainty that there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant effect on the environment.

Conclusions of Law

1. Public convenience and necessity has been demonstrated and the application, as amended, should be granted.
2. Before Applicant changes any fares under the ZORF authorized below, Applicant should give this Commission at least ten days' notice. The tariff should show the high and low ends of the ZORF and the then currently effective fare between each pair of service points.
3. Since the matter is uncontested, the decision should be effective on the date it is signed.
4. Only the amount paid to the State for operative rights may be used in rate fixing. The State may grant any number of rights and may cancel or modify the monopoly feature of these rights at any time.

O R D E R

IT IS ORDERED that:

1. A certificate of public convenience and necessity (CPCN) is granted to Fernando Hernandez (Applicant), an individual, authorizing him to operate as a

passenger stage corporation (PSC), as defined in Pub. Util. Code § 226, to transport persons and their baggage between the points and over the routes set forth in Appendix PSC-16878, subject to the conditions contained in the following paragraphs.

2. Applicant shall:

- a. File a written acceptance of this certificate within 30 days after this order is effective.
- b. Establish the authorized service and file tariffs and timetables within 120 days after this order is effective.
- c. File tariffs on or after the effective date of this order. They shall become effective ten days or more after the effective date of this order, provided that the Commission and the public are given not less than ten days' notice.
- d. Comply with General Orders Series 101 and 158, and the California Highway Patrol (CHP) safety rules.
- e. Comply with the controlled substance and alcohol testing certification program pursuant to Pub. Util. Code § 1032.1 and General Order Series 158.
- f. Remit to the Commission the Transportation Reimbursement Fee required by Pub. Util. Code § 423 when notified by mail to do so.
- g. Comply with Pub. Util. Code §§ 460.7 and 1043, relating to the Workers' Compensation laws of this state.
- h. Enroll all drivers in the pull notice system as required by Section 1808.1 of the Vehicle Code.

3. Applicant is authorized under Pub. Util. Code § 454.2 to establish a zone of rate freedom (ZORF) of \$5 above and below the proposed fares set forth in the application.

4. Applicant shall file a ZORF tariff in accordance with the application on not less than ten days' notice to the Commission and to the public. The ZORF shall expire unless exercised within 120 days after the effective date of this order.

5. Applicant may make changes within the ZORF by filing amended tariffs on not less than ten days' notice to the Commission and to the public. The tariff shall include the authorized maximum and minimum fares and the fare to be charged between each pair of service points.

6. In addition to posting and filing tariffs, Applicant shall post notices explaining fare changes in his terminals and passenger-carrying vehicles. Such notices shall be posted at least ten days before the effective date of the fare changes and shall remain posted for at least 30 days.

7. Applicant is authorized to begin operations on the date that the Consumer Protection and Safety Division mails a notice to Applicant that his evidence of insurance and other documents required by Ordering Paragraph 2 have been filed with the Commission and that the CHP has approved the use of Applicant's vehicles for service.

8. Before beginning service to any airport, Applicant shall notify the airport's governing body. Applicant shall not operate into or on airport property unless such operations are authorized by the airport's governing body.

9. The CPCN to operate as PSC-16878, granted herein, expires unless exercised within 120 days after the effective date of this order.

10. The Application is granted as set forth above.

11. This proceeding is closed.

This order is effective today.

Dated May 26, 2005, at San Francisco, California.

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY
President
GEOFFREY F. BROWN
SUSAN P. KENNEDY
DIAN M. GRUENEICH
JOHN A. BOHN
Commissioners

CERTIFICATE
OF
PUBLIC CONVENIENCE AND NECESSITY
AS A PASSENGER STAGE CORPORATION
PSC-16878

Showing passenger stage operative rights, restrictions,
limitations, exceptions, and privileges.

All changes and amendments as authorized by
the Public Utilities Commission of the State of California
will be made as revised pages or added original pages.

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SECTION I. GENERAL AUTHORIZATIONS, RESTRICTIONS,
LIMITATIONS, AND SPECIFICATIONS.

Fernando Hernandez, an individual, by the certificate of public convenience and necessity granted by the decision noted in the foot of the margin, is authorized to transport passengers and their baggage on an "on-call" basis between the points described in Section II, over the routes described in Section III, subject, however, to the authority of this Commission to change or modify this authority at any time and subject to the following provisions:

- A. When a route description is given in one direction, it applies to operation in either direction unless otherwise indicated.
- B. The term "on-call," as used, refers to service which is authorized to be rendered dependent on the demands of passengers. The tariffs shall show the conditions under which each authorized on-call service will be provided, and shall include the description of the boundary of each fare zone, except when a single fare is charged to all points within a single incorporated city.
- C. No passengers shall be transported except those having a point of origin or destination as described in Section IIA.
- D. This certificate does not authorize the holder to conduct any operation on the property of any airport unless such operation is authorized by the airport authority involved.

SECTION II. SERVICE AREA.

- A. Hotels and motels located in the City of Palm Springs.
- B. Points in the Cities of Palm Springs, Cathedral City, Rancho Mirage, Palm Desert, Desert Hot Springs, Indian Wells, and La Quinta.

SECTION III. ROUTE DESCRIPTION.

Commencing from any point as described in Section IIA, then over the most convenient streets and highways to any point described in Section IIB.