Decision D.21-10-018

BEFORE THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA

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| Application of Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086) for Authority to Increase Rates Between Points in Santa Maria, Buellton, Santa Barbara and Ventura and the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX) and to establish a Zone of Rate Freedom (ZORF). | Application 21-08-008  (Filed August 11, 2021) |

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ORDER GRANTING APPLICATION

# Summary

This decision grants the application of Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086) to increase its current fares and to establish a Zone of Rate Freedom, pursuant to Pub. Util. Code § 454.2. This application was filed pursuant to the procedures adopted in Decision (D.)15-05-029. This proceeding is closed.

# Discussion

Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086) (Applicant), provides Passenger Stage Corporation (PSC) service under a certificate most recently updated by Decision (D.) 08-12-030. The certificate authorizes the transportation of passengers and their baggage on a scheduled and on-call basis between points in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties to and from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), San Luis County Regional Airport (SBP), Santa Maria Public Airport (SMX), and Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA). The application requests authority to increase rates between LAX and points in Santa Maria, Buellton, Santa Barbara, and Ventura with a Zone of Rate Freedom (ZORF) of $10 above and below the proposed rates.

Current fares range from $40 to $80 (scheduled) and $80 to $150 (on-call). Proposed fares range from $50 to $90 (scheduled) and $90 to $170 (on-call).

Applicant requests a ZORF of $10 above and below the proposed rates. In the case of the $50 rate, this is 20 percent of the base rate, which is inconsistent with the provisions of D.15-05-029 that only authorize a ZORF of 15 percent. Hence, we will limit the ZORF to 15 percent. Applicant believes the proposed rates are competitive and reasonable and will provide a fairly priced alternative to travel to and from the applicable service points. Applicant competes with other PSCs, taxicabs, transportation network companies (TNCs), limousines, public transit, and private automobiles in the service area; this highly competitive environment should result in Applicant pricing its services at a reasonable level.

Notice of filing of the application appeared in the Commission’s Daily Calendar on August 12, 2021.

Since the proposed service will reduce the number of vehicles on the public highways in between points in the service territory, a California Environmental Quality Act review is not required because there is no possibility that the activity may have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

In Resolution ALJ 176-3491, dated August 19, 2021, 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 176-3491.

Waiver of Comment Period

This is an uncontested matter in which the decision grants the relief requested. Accordingly, pursuant to Section 311(g)(2) of the Public Utilities Code and Rule 14.6(c)(2) of the Commission’s Rules of Practice and Procedure, the otherwise applicable 30-day period for public review and comment is waived.

Safety Considerations

In order to be authorized to commence operations as a PSC, the Applicant must comply with the following requirements in order to protect public safety: Proof of insurance pursuant to General Order Series 101, compliance with the controlled substance and alcohol testing program pursuant to Pub. Util. Code §1032.1 and General Order Series 158, and enrollment in the Pull Notice System as required by Section 1808.1 of the Vehicle Code.

Assignment of Proceeding

Douglas Ito is the assigned Examiner in this proceeding.

Findings of Fact

1. Applicant operates as a scheduled and on-call PSC pursuant to D.08-12-030 between points in San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, and Ventura Counties to and from Los Angeles International Airport (LAX), San Luis County Regional Airport (SBP), Santa Maria Public Airport (SMX), and Santa Barbara Municipal Airport (SBA).
2. Applicant requests authority to increase its current rates from $40 to $80 (scheduled) and $80 to $150 (on-call) to $50 to $90 (scheduled) and $90 to $170 (on-call).
3. Applicant requests a ZORF of $10 above and below the proposed rates.
4. In the case of the $50 rate, this is 20 percent of the base rate.
5. This is inconsistent with the provisions of D.15-05-029 which only authorize a ZORF of 15 percent.
6. A ZORF of +/- 15 percent should be authorized.
7. Applicant will compete with other PSCs, taxicabs, TNCs, limousines, public transit, and private automobiles in its operations.
8. No protest to the application has been filed.
9. A public hearing is not necessary.
10. The application complied with the PSC certification procedures adopted in D.15-05-029.

**Conclusions of Law**

1. Public convenience and necessity have been demonstrated and the application should be granted.
2. The Executive Director is authorized to sign, on behalf of the Commission, orders concerning PSC certification in the process adopted in D.15-05-029.
3. A ZORF of +/- 15 percent should be granted because the ZORF is fair and reasonable.
4. 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.
5. Because the matter is uncontested, the decision should be effective on the date it is signed.
6. A public hearing is not necessary.
7. A California Environmental Quality Act review is not required for this decision because there is no possibility that the activity in question may have a significant adverse effect on the environment.

ORDER

**IT IS ORDERED** that:

1. Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086), is authorized to increase its current fares as proposed in the application, with a Zone of Rate Freedom of +/- 15 percent.
2. Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086), shall file a tariff with its increased fares and a Zone of Rate Freedom (ZORF) tariff with the Commission and the public in accordance with the application at least ten days before the effective date of the tariff. The ZORF shall expire unless exercised within 120 days after the effective date of this decision.
3. Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086), may make changes within the Zone of Rate Freedom 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.
4. In addition to posting and filing tariffs, Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086), shall post notices explaining fare changes in its 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.
5. Stop points established by Central Coast Shuttle Services, Inc. (PSC-13086) to load and discharge passengers shall conform to all applicable parking or passenger loading zone regulations adopted by local authorities.
6. The Application is granted as set forth above.
7. This proceeding is closed.

This decision is effective today.

Dated October 18th, at San Francisco, California.

\_\_\_/s/Rachel Peterson\_\_\_\_

Rachel Peterson

Executive Director