

# Memorandum

To: CHAIR AND COMMISSIONERS

CTC Meeting: October 8, 2013

Reference No.: 4.19  
Action

From: ANDRE BOUTROS  
Executive Director

Subject: **PROPOSED FY 2014-15 ALLOCATION SET-ASIDE FOR THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION RAILROAD GRADE CROSSING PROTECTION MAINTENANCE PROGRAM, RESOLUTION G-13-15**

## **ISSUE:**

Should the Commission support the Public Utilities Commission's (PUC) request (Attachment A) to increase the allocation set-aside for the Railroad Grade Crossing Maintenance Program in the FY 2014-15 State Budget from \$2 million to \$3.765 million?

## **RECOMMENDATION:**

Staff recommends that the Commission adopt Resolution G-13-15 (Attachment B) supporting only \$2 million for the Railroad Grade Crossing Maintenance Program in the FY 2014-15 Budget.

Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1 permits the Commission to increase the set-aside amount for the Railroad Grade Crossing Maintenance Program. While the Commission has increased the set-aside for the last five years, to \$2 million from the statutorily required \$1 million minimum, State Highway Account revenues directed to the Railroad Grade Crossing Maintenance Program means less for State Highway Operation and Protection Program (SHOPP) projects.

Although it is important to maintain grade crossing protection devices at the interface of road/rail transportation systems, the Commission must consider all programs under its purview.

## **BACKGROUND:**

The Automatic Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Fund was established in 1965 by the State Legislature to pay the local share of the cost for maintaining automatic grade crossing protection devices installed by the railroad corporations after October 1, 1965. The local share represents only 50% of the total project cost; the other 50% is borne by the railroad corporations. This 50-50 payment split presumes that rail and highway users equally share the crossing and should therefore equally share the cost of maintaining the crossing devices.

Initially, annual appropriations of \$1 million for maintenance of warning devices was sufficient to cover all claims filed by the railroad and street railroad corporations. In 1973, changes to the federal grade crossing protection funding program resulted in increased installations and upgrading of automatic grade crossing protection devices. Consequently claims began exceeding the funds available from 1977 onward. Consistent with the claims made over the last five years, the claims for FY 2014-15 are expected to be about \$3.765 million for approximately 2,700 crossings, but the reimbursement of claims would be limited to the amount recommended for allocation by the Commission.

Attachments

SED/RCES/EJH/PWK/DAR/AGG/MKP/MC1/vdl Date of Issuance 9/6/2013

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA**

Safety and Enforcement Division Rail Transit and Crossings Branch Rail Crossings Engineering Section	San Francisco, California September 5, 2013 Resolution SX-107
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**RESOLUTION**

RECOMMENDATION TO THE CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION FOR INCREASED FUNDING TO BE SET ASIDE FOR MAINTAINING AUTOMATIC GRADE CROSSING PROTECTION DEVICES UNDER PUBLIC UTILITIES CODE SECTION 1231.1

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**SUMMARY**

This resolution recommends that, for the 2014-2015 fiscal year, the California Transportation Commission allocate the sum of \$3,765,000 for the purpose of paying the local government's share of the cost of maintaining automatic grade crossing warning devices.

**BACKGROUND**

The Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Fund was established by the Legislature in 1965 to pay railroad corporations the local government's share of the cost of maintaining automatic railroad crossing warning devices installed or upgraded after October 1, 1965. Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1 requires the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to set aside a minimum of \$1,000,000 for the payment of those costs.

In 1988, an amendment to Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1<sup>1</sup> was enacted which specifies that the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) may recommend a sum greater than \$1,000,000 be set aside if it finds that the \$1,000,000 is not

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<sup>1</sup> AB 3065, (Polanco) September 29, 1988.

sufficient due to an increase in the number of grade crossing warning devices or an increase in the cost of maintenance of those devices. The specific amount of the total allocation shall be determined by the California Transportation Commission (CTC.)

**DISCUSSION**

When the automatic grade crossing protection maintenance fund was first established in 1965, the maximum annual allocation of \$1,000,000 was sufficient to cover all claims filed by railroad and street railroad corporations. However, the increase in the number of crossing warning devices and the increase in the cost for maintaining these devices caused claims to exceed the funds available for calendar year 1977 and thereafter.

The railroads perform the required maintenance during a given calendar year, and then file a claim with the PUC for reimbursement of the local government’s share of the maintenance costs. The PUC verifies the claims and forwards valid claims to Caltrans for payment. These claims are paid from the allocation made by the CTC in the Caltrans budget. Claims and payments for the past five years were as follows:

CY *	FY*	No. of crossings	Total Claims (\$)	Total Paid (\$)
2008	08-09	2,702	3,807,599	2,000,000
2009	09-10	2,710	3,829,679	2,000,000
2010	10-11	2,690	3,804,459	2,000,000
2011	11-12	2,667	3,778,156	2,000,000
2012	12-13	2,655	3,763,433	2,000,000

\*CY-Calendar Year

\*FY-Fiscal Year

The maintenance fund costs and respective claims for calendar year 2014 (FY 2014-2015) are expected to be significantly higher than the \$2,000,000 the CTC allocated for FY 2013-2014. Based on the previously submitted maintenance claims and the numbers and types of warning devices eligible, an allocation of

\$3,765,000 will be needed for the 2014-2015 FY and would constitute the minimum amount necessary for that maintenance.

### **NOTICE**

On August 1, 2013, this Resolution was published in the California Public Utilities Commission's (Commission) Daily Calendar.

### **COMMENTS**

The draft resolution of the Safety and Enforcement Division in this matter was mailed in accordance with Section 311 of the Public Utilities Code and Rule 14.2(c) of the Commission's Rules of Practice and Procedure. No comments were received.

### **FINDINGS**

The Commission staff has reviewed the amount needed to be allocated pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1 and finds that an amount of \$1,000,000 will be insufficient and finds, instead, that an allocation of \$3,765,000 is the minimum amount necessary for allocation to the Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Fund for FY 2014-2015.

Therefore, in accordance with Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1, the Commission staff finds that the PUC should recommend to the CTC that a sum of \$3,765,000 be allocated for the 2014-2015 FY for the purpose of paying to railroad or street railroad corporations the share of the costs to cities and counties of maintaining automatic grade crossing protection/warning devices. The Commission staff recommends that this Resolution be adopted.

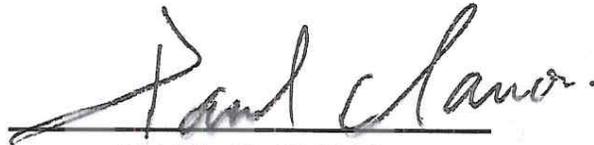
### **THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED THAT:**

The Public Utilities Commission recommends to the California Transportation Commission that a sum of \$3,765,000 be allocated for the 2014-2015 fiscal year for the purpose of paying to railroad corporations the share of the costs of cities

and counties for maintaining automatic grade crossing protection/warning devices pursuant to Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1.

This resolution is effective today.

I certify that the foregoing resolution was duly introduced, passed, and adopted by the California Public Utilities Commission at its regularly scheduled meeting on September 5, 2013. The following Commissioners voted favorably thereon:



PAUL CLANON  
Executive Director

MICHAEL R. PEEVEY

President

CATHERINE J.K. SANDOVAL

MARK J. FERRON

CARLA J. PETERMAN

Commissioners

Commissioner Michel Peter Florio, being necessarily absent, did not participate.

**CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION**  
California Public Utilities Commission  
Railroad Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Program  
Allocation Set-Aside for \$2 Million in FY 2014-15

**Resolution #G-13-15**

- 1.1 WHEREAS, the Automatic Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Fund was established by the Legislature in 1965 (Public Utilities Code Section 1231.1) to pay the local share of the cost of maintaining automatic grade crossing protection devices installed by railroad corporations after October 1, 1965; and
- 1.2 WHEREAS, since 1967 a minimum of \$1 million per year has been appropriated by the State Legislature and allocated by the California Transportation Commission to the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) for its Railroad Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Program; and
- 1.3 WHEREAS, in 1973 the federal law changed, which resulted in the increased installation and upgrading of automatic grade crossing protection devices; and
- 1.4 WHEREAS, the total claims submitted by the railroad corporations have substantially exceeded the \$1 million cap since 1977; and
- 1.5 WHEREAS, the anticipated claims to be submitted to the CPUC for FY 2014-15 are estimated to be about \$3.765 million, which exceeds the annual \$1 million required allocation set-aside by \$2.765 million; and
- 1.6 WHEREAS, the Commission considered the revenues in the State Highway Account, as well as programs funded through the State Highway Account.
- 2.1 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the California Transportation Commission supports a \$2 million allocation set-aside in the FY 2014-15 Budget for the PUC Railroad Grade Crossing Protection Maintenance Program, rather than the PUC-recommended allocation set-aside of \$3.765 million.