

# THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO

IN THE MATTER OF THE AUTHORIZATION  
OF NORFOLK SOUTHERN RAILWAY TO  
UPGRADE ACTIVE WARNING DEVICES  
AT TWO GRADE CROSSINGS IN THE CITY  
OF COLUMBUS, IN FRANKLIN COUNTY.

CASE NO. 18-1314-RR-FED

## FINDING AND ORDER

Entered in the Journal on September 26, 2018

### I. SUMMARY

{¶ 1} The Commission directs Norfolk Southern Railway to install upgrade circuitry and add advanced traffic preemption to the active warning devices at grade crossings at Lockbourne Road and Fairwood Avenue in the city of Columbus, Franklin County, by September 26, 2019, subject to the Commission's ongoing jurisdiction and oversight.

### II. DISCUSSION

{¶ 2} R.C. 4905.04 provides that the Commission has statutory authority to regulate and promote the welfare and safety of railroad employees and the traveling public.

{¶ 3} R.C. 4907.471 provides that the Commission shall survey all grade crossings and establish a priority list to determine which grade crossings are in need of additional protective devices.

{¶ 4} R.C. 4907.476 provides that where the Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) enters into contracts and agreements for grade crossing protective device projects, the Commission shall work with and through the department. Federal funding for such projects is provided through the Ohio Rail Development Commission (ORDC), which is an independent agency of the state within ODOT, established in accordance with R.C. 4981.02.

{¶ 5} Norfolk Southern Railway (NS) is a railroad as defined in R.C. 4907.02 and subject to the jurisdiction of the Commission under R.C. 4905.04.

{¶ 6} On August 23, 2018, Staff filed a memorandum indicating that ORDC has authorized funding for NS to upgrade circuitry and add advanced traffic preemption to the active warning devices at grade crossings at Lockbourne Road and Fairwood Avenue in the city of Columbus, subject to the Commission's ongoing jurisdiction and oversight. Details of the projects are as follows:

DOT#	Improvement or Closure	Street	Federal Funds Provided
513362E	Upgrade circuitry and add advanced traffic preemption	Lockbourne Road	\$515,063 subject to revision after bid tabulation
513364T	Upgrade circuitry and add advanced traffic preemption	Fairwood Avenue	\$585,369, subject to revision after bid tabulation

Staff notes that the crossings were surveyed on July 25, 2016, and were found to warrant the upgrades. Staff adds that plans and estimates have been approved, subject to revision after bid tabulation, and will be paid fully by federal funds. Staff requests that the Commission issue an order directing completion within 12 months.

{¶ 7} Upon review, NS is hereby authorized to acquire materials for the projects and to commence construction as detailed in the letter of construction authorization. NS shall notify Staff at least five working days before the date work is scheduled to begin at the projects so that arrangements can be made for any inspection. In addition, NS shall timely notify Staff of any changes in the scope of work, cost overruns, materials, etc., which are not in the approved plans in order to estimate and secure approval before the work is performed.

{¶ 8} Within 30 days of the issuance of this Finding and Order, NS shall file notice that it has initiated discussions with AEP-Ohio (AEP) and any other applicable utility, to ensure that electric service will be available to enable the grade crossing improvements to be constructed and placed in service within the deadline specified by the Commission. Such filing shall identify the steps NS has taken with AEP, any other electric utility, and the local highway authority to have electric service available during the construction and cut-in phases of the projects. NS shall serve a copy of the notice upon AEP and any other applicable utility. To ensure that the deadline is met, AEP and any other applicable utility shall timely inform the Commission in writing of any issues regarding the availability of electric service.

{¶ 9} The Commission will issue no further construction authorization. Further, the grade crossing improvement projects should be completed by September 26, 2019.

{¶ 10} It is expected that all work necessary for Federal Highway Administration acceptance of the warning devices will be completed by the in-service due date and that NS will be responsible for this work. This work includes, but is not limited to, any ancillary work to make the warning devices function as designed and visible to the roadway user, and Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices compliance, including minor roadway work, if necessary.

{¶ 11} In order to expedite the activation of the warning devices, the Commission no longer requires a delay in activation pending final inspection by Staff. However, NS should notify Staff and ORDC 30 days before the projected date of completion. At the time Staff or ORDC makes its final inspection of the devices and finds that the identified installations are complete and the warning devices have been put in service, Staff should file a memorandum in this docket indicating that the installations are complete and that the warning devices have been put in service. The memorandum should also include Staff's findings that the traffic signal preemption is in operation.

{¶ 12} With the intention of promoting increased public safety during the pendency of the projects, the Commission urges the appropriate local government agency to make an immediate assessment of interim physical improvements, which would enhance driver awareness at the crossings. The Commission may provide assistance in funding improvements, such as rumble strips, illumination, signs or other safety enhancements for the projects. Applications for such funding should be made to the Commission's Transportation Department, Rail Division, which shall review any proposal. In the event the department finds the improvements appropriate, the department director is hereby authorized to execute a contract with the local government agency, and obligate up to \$5,000 from the State Grade Crossing Safety Fund for such improvements at the locations of the projects. However, the local government agency should not initiate any improvements until a contract has been executed.

### III. ORDER

{¶ 13} It is, therefore,

{¶ 14} ORDERED, That by October 26, 2018, NS file notice that it has initiated with AEP, or any applicable utility, the process to ensure that electric service will be available at the involved grade crossings as set forth in Paragraph 8. It is, further,

{¶ 15} ORDERED, That NS follow the detailed instructions as outlined in the ORDC letter of construction authorization and proceed with and complete the projects by September 26, 2019. It is, further,

{¶ 16} ORDERED, That NS notify Staff at least five working days before the date work is scheduled to begin at the sites of the projects so that arrangements can be made for any inspection. It is, further,

{¶ 17} ORDERED, That NS timely notify Staff of any changes in the scope of work, cost overruns, materials, etc., which are not in the approved plans and estimates, and shall secure approval before the work is performed. It is, further,

{¶ 18} ORDERED, That NS notify the Commission and ORDC 30 days before the projected date of completion. It is, further,

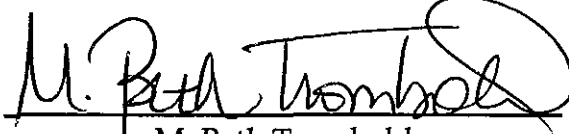
{¶ 19} ORDERED, That, at the time Staff or ORDC makes its final inspection and finds that the installations at the grade crossings are complete and the warning devices have been put in service, Staff will file a memorandum in this docket indicating that the installations are complete and the warning devices have been put in service. The memorandum should also include Staff's findings that the traffic signal preemption is in operation. It is, further,

{¶ 20} ORDERED, That a copy of this Finding and Order be served upon ORDC, NS, Department of Public Service for the city of Columbus, AEP, and any other interested person of record.

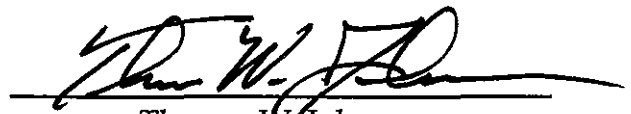
## THE PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO



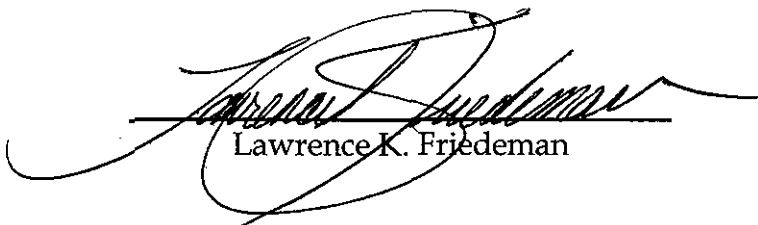
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Asim Z. Haque, Chairman

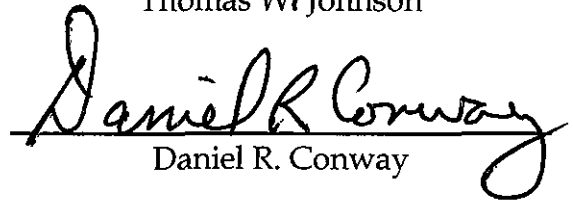
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M. Beth Trombold

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Thomas W. Johnson

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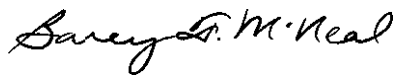
Lawrence K. Friedeman

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Daniel R. Conway

JML/hac

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**SEP 26 2018**

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Barcy F. McNeal  
Secretary