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**A report by the Staff of the
Public Utilities Commission of Ohio**

PUCO Case No 16-1561-RR-RCP

In the Matter of the Petition by the City of Coshocton for Exempt Crossing
Designations at nine grade crossings with the Ohio Central Railroad

August 22, 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Rail Division

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) works with local highway authorities and communities to provide safety for the citizens of Ohio at highway-railroad grade crossings.

The PUCO has the statutory authority to regulate and promote the welfare and safety of railroad employees and the traveling public pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 4905.471; and

The PUCO has the authority to close public at grade crossings pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Sections 4907.474 and 4907.475. The sections set forth a variety of factors to be considered by the Commission in determining whether there is a demonstrable need for any public grade crossing to exist and whether any such crossing could be closed to vehicular traffic, pedestrian traffic, or both and the travel over the grade crossing diverted to other grade crossings.

The PUCO is responsible for evaluating public highway-railroad grade crossings to determine the need for upgrading the warning devices and apportioning the cost thereof pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 4907.471.

The PUCO has the authority under Ohio Revised Code Section 4511.63 (B) to declare a grade crossing exempt, whereby vehicles normally required to stop at a grade crossing under that title and Code of Federal Regulations Title 49, 392.10 would be able to proceed through the crossing without stopping.

The PUCO enforces all aspects of the Federal Railroad Administration regulations through inspections and evaluations of Ohio's public highway-railroad grade crossings.

I. DESCRIPTION OF APPLICANT

The City of Coshocton. Located in Coshocton County, is the local highway authority with jurisdiction over nine grade crossings with Ohio Central Railroad which are the subject of a petition for exemption under 45 ORC 4511.63.

II. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The City of Coshocton has petitioned for an exemption from school busses and hazardous materials transporters stopping at the following grade crossings:

Sleepy Hollow Dr, 474191W

Fairy Falls Ave, 474192D

Denman Ave, 474193K

Kenilworth Ave, 474194S

Cambridge Rd, 474195Y

Hamilton Ave, 474196F

Walnut St, 474198U

East Main St, 474199B

Chestnut St, 474200T

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Kenilworth Avenue, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474194S

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 114.72 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track and two siding tracks which currently has standard crossbucks and yield signs as a passive highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The roadway is used by both school buses and hazardous material vehicles the exemption would help reduce the possibility of rear end collisions at a crossing with no current rail traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Cambridge Road, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCN).

DOT #: 474193K

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway and area where the grade crossing was located at one time. The rails were removed from the roadway, the crossing surface was paved over and the warning devices had been removed. The crossing is currently listed as closed in the PUCO database.

August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The crossing has been closed at the PUCO level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission not grant the exemption since the crossing is paved over and closed it would not be a viable candidate for an exemption. If the crossing is ever reopened then it could be revisited.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Chestnut Street, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474200T

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway and area where the grade crossing was located at one time. The rails were removed from the roadway, the crossing surface was paved over and the warning devices had been removed. The crossing is currently listed as closed in the PUCO database. The crossing was downgraded and closed under PUCO commission order 13-1994-RR-RCP dated December 4, 2013.

August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

It should be noted the original entry docketed for this case has the Chestnut Street DOT number listed at 517389C. This crossing is located on the Columbus and Ohio River railroad. The original letter sent into the PUCO has the crossing the city of Coshocton is requesting to be exempt as crossing 1596. On the PUCO database crossing ID number 1596 is Chestnut Street with the DOT number of 474200T. This crossing is on the Ohio Central Railroad and the same line as the rest of the crossings the city is requesting exemptions on.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The crossing has been closed at the PUCO level.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission not grant the exemption since the crossing is paved over and closed it would not be a viable candidate for an exemption. If the crossing is ever reopened then it could be revisited.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Denman Avenue, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474193K

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 115.04 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track which currently has standard crossbucks and yield signs as a passive highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The roadway is used by both school buses and hazardous material vehicles the exemption would help reduce the possibility of rear end collisions at a crossing with no current rail traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Fairy Falls Drive, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474192D

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 115.3 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track which currently has standard crossbucks and yield signs as a passive highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The roadway is used by both school buses and hazardous material vehicles the exemption would help reduce the possibility of rear end collisions at a crossing with no current rail traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Hamilton Avenue, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474196F

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 114.53 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track which currently has standard crossbucks and yield signs as a passive highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The roadway is used by both school buses and hazardous material vehicles the exemption would help reduce the possibility of rear end collisions at a crossing with no current rail traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Main Street , Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474199B

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 114.13 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track which currently has standard flashers as an active highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The roadway is used by both school buses and hazardous material vehicles the exemption would help reduce the possibility of rear end collisions at a crossing with no current rail traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Sleepy Hollow Drive, Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474191W

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 115.4 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track which currently has standard crossbucks and yield signs as a passive highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The east and west approaches have advanced warning signs. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

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RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

**PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION OF OHIO
TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT
RAIL DIVISION**

Date of Assignment: August 8, 2016

Date of Inspection: August 9, 2016

Subject: 16-1561-RR-RCP – Petition for exemption, Walnut Street , Coshocton, Coshocton County, Ohio Central Railroad (OHCR).

DOT #: 474198U

FINDINGS

On receipt of the present assignment, I conducted an inspection of the crossing on August 9, 2016. The city of Coshocton is seeking an exemption for the grade crossing under Ohio Revised Code 4511.63.

On the above noted day, I inspected the highway rail grade crossing which is located in Coshocton. Upon inspection I found a two lane roadway that travels north and south and is intersected by a highway rail grade crossing owned by the Ohio Central Railroad. The tracks intersect the roadway at M.P. 114.3 and runs east and west. The crossing consists of one main track which currently has standard crossbucks and yield signs as a passive highway rail grade crossing warning system. The roadway has a speed limit of 25 mph. The rail line has a timetable posted speed limit of 10 mph.

On August 15, 2016 I sent an email to the Ohio Central Railroad. I advised them of the application for exemption and requested information on the railroads train traffic over the line. The railroad advised the crossings at Cambridge Rd and Chestnut are already downgraded. The rails have been pulled on both sides of the crossings and removed from the street. The rails are also pulled on the south side of Otsego. The rest of the noted crossings are between Chestnut and Otsego and are inaccessible. The Railroad has not had any train traffic over these crossing in a number of years and does not intend to run trains over them in the foreseeable future. They do not relinquish their right to open this line in the future but understand the warning devices will be restored at the Railroads expense should they do so.

The Railroad does not object to the City of Coshocton installing exempt signs at the noted crossings.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Currently the railroad does not have any traffic over the roadway. The roadway is used by both school buses and hazardous material vehicles the exemption would help reduce the possibility of rear end collisions at a crossing with no current rail traffic.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the foregoing findings and conclusion, I recommend the commission grant the exemption with the requirement the railroad must place a stop and flag order on the crossing for any future train movements over the highway rail grade crossing and in the event rail traffic greatly increases the exemption status should be reviewed to verify it is feasible to remain in place.

Shawn Zurfley
PUCO/FRA Rail Inspector
Date: August 17, 2016

IV. Ohio's Rail Grade Crossing Programs

Ohio is a national leader in terms of railroad operations. Ohio is home to nearly 40 railroads that operate thousands of trains in Ohio every day over approximately 5,200 miles of track and 5,900 public grade crossings. The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio (PUCO) is the state agency with regulatory authority over railroads operating in Ohio. The Commission works in partnership with the Federal Railroad Administration to ensure that rail operations and infrastructure are safe and in compliance with federal and state regulations.

In addition to central office planners and other support staff, the PUCO employs federally certified railroad inspectors throughout Ohio. These inspectors respond to inquiries and complaints and conduct specialized inspections of railroad tracks and equipment, rail operations, hazardous material transportation, and grade crossing signal circuitry. The inspectors also monitor railroad rights-of-way and grade crossings for surface conditions, view obstruction, fencing and drainage concerns, conditions on railroad equipment and at rail yards and other facilities, and related safety concerns of both the PUCO and railroad employees.

PUCO inspectors investigate all grade crossing and railroad employee fatalities and monitor company inspections of rail bridges throughout the state.

Safety is our highest priority

Grade crossing safety is one of the PUCO's highest priorities, and we are proud of our accomplishments. Since 1990, motor vehicle/train crashes at grade crossings in Ohio have declined by 66 percent and the number of fatalities has dropped by 77 percent. This dramatic improvement has been achieved during a period of steady increase in the amount of train traffic and in the number of registered motor vehicles and licensed drivers in Ohio. Over the past 10 years, the PUCO has participated in the installation of lights and gates at more than 1,000 grade crossings across Ohio. We look forward to working with your community to help make grade crossings as safe as possible.

Questions or Concerns?

Call the Ohio Rail Hotline at (866) 814-RAIL or log on to www.OhioRail.ohio.gov for answers to all of your railroad crossing needs.

The Public Utilities Commission of Ohio
John R. Kasich, Governor
Asim Z. Haque, Chairman

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