

**Board Report**

File #: 2016-0568, **File Type:** Motion / Motion Response**Agenda Number:** 27.

REVISED
SYSTEM SAFETY, SECURITY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE
AUGUST 18, 2016

SUBJECT: METROLINK BNSF LOCOMOTIVE TRAIN HORNS AND QUIET ZONES**ACTION: RECEIVE AND FILE****RECOMMENDATION**

RECEIVE AND FILE a **comprehensive study of communities/cities impacted by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) locomotive train horns** as a response to the May 2016 Board directive.

ISSUE

At the May 19, 2016, System, Safety Security and Operations Committee meeting, Directors Najarian and Antonovich directed the CEO to create a comprehensive study of all communities/cities impacted by the BNSF locomotive train horns on the Metrolink commuter rail system and work with Southern California Regional Rail Authority (SCRRA) staff to prioritize those impacted cities most in need of quiet zones (refer to Attachment A).

DISCUSSION**BNSF Trains Horns**

In late 2015, SCRRA began operating 40 leased locomotives provided by the BNSF, due to a safety concern. The locomotives emit a higher-decibel five-chime horn, which is noticeably louder than the lower Metrolink three-chime horn locomotives. SCRRA has received multiple complaints from residents in the San Gabriel Valley, in particular, about the noise from horns, and the impacts to residents' quality of life along the Metrolink San Bernardino Line.

SCRRA has conducted several community meetings and made presentations at city council meetings of affected cities in the San Gabriel Valley (see Attachment B). SCRRA has indicated that the increased train horn noise issues is a temporary condition, as the BNSF lease is for one year only, ending on November 1, 2016. SCRRA plans to return the locomotives to the BNSF as soon as possible in advance of November 1st. Additionally, SCRRA has changed some of the "push-pull" configuration of locomotives on some train sets, which has helped to reduce complaints regarding train horn noise.

Quiet Zones

In 2005, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued the Train Horn Rule, which set the nation-wide standards for the sounding of train horns at public highway-rail grade crossings. In addition to establishing criteria for the sounding of train horns, the Train Horn Rule established a process for communities to obtain relief from the sound of train horns by providing criteria for the establishment of quiet zones. Only a public authority responsible for traffic control or law enforcement at the public highway-rail grade or pedestrian crossing (i.e. city) may establish a quiet zone. The quiet zone must be at least ½ mile in length and have at least one highway-rail grade crossing.

Generally, cities initiate the quiet zone process by conducting a comprehensive diagnostic assessment at each crossing. According to Federal requirements, diagnostic meetings are conducted and Supplementary Safety Measures (SSMs) are identified and recommended to meet quiet zone safety requirements. Some typical SSM improvements to the grade crossings include medians or channelization devices, a four-quadrant gate system to block all lanes of highway traffic, one-way streets with gates, and/or permanent crossing closures. The initial capital costs for quiet zone improvements can vary from \$500,000 per crossing up to \$3 million per crossing depending upon the type of existing improvements in place and the SSMs required.

The cities of Pomona and Industry have implemented quiet zones along the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Alhambra and Los Angeles subdivisions. FRA data indicates that vehicle accidents at five grade crossings in the City of Pomona declined by more than 50% since quiet zones were implemented in 2007. The City of Glendale has completed quiet zone ready improvements at three crossings in the city, and intends to file a NOI with the FRA for a quiet zone in late 2016. The City of Burbank is making improvements to the Buena Vista/Vanowen crossing to make it quiet zone ready, and is pursuing a quiet zone. Additionally, several cities in the San Gabriel Valley such as Claremont, Baldwin Park and San Dimas including Glendale have recently expressed interest in pursuing quiet zones. The San Gabriel Valley Council of Governments has also indicated to SCRRRA a desire to work regionally towards quiet zone improvements in the San Gabriel Valley.

In 2010 and 2011, the Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) embarked on a comprehensive, countywide program to implement quiet zones throughout Orange County. At a total cost of \$85 million, 52 two crossings in eight cities such as Orange, Anaheim, Santa Ana, Tustin, San Juan Capistrano, Dana Point, San Clemente and Irvine along OCTA owned right-of-way were upgraded with SSM improvements and have received acceptance by the FRA as quiet zones. At the time, this was the largest grade crossing safety enhancement and quiet zone program in the United States.


ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A - Motion #33 BNSF Locomotives Noise Factor

Attachment B - Los Angeles County Cities Impacted by BNSF Horn Issue and
SCRRRA Community Outreach Efforts

Prepared by: Jay Fuhrman, Transportation Planning Manager, (213) 922-2180
Jeanet Owens, P.E. Executive Officer, (213) 922-6877

Reviewed by: Richard Clarke, Chief, Program Management (213) 922-7557



Phillip A. Washington
Chief Executive Officer

ATTACHMENT A Metro

Los Angeles County
Metropolitan Transportation
Authority
One Gateway Plaza
3rd Floor Board Room
Los Angeles, CA



Board Report

File #:2016-0411, File Type:Motion / Motion
Response

Agenda Number:33

SYSTEM SAFETY, SECURITY AND OPERATIONS COMMITTEE MAY 19, 2016

Motion by:

Director Najarian and Antonovich

May 19, 2016

BSNF Locomotives Noise Factor

Since the approval from the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) and the California Public Utilities Commission (PUC) for a quiet zone through the City of Glendale, I have been receiving inquiries from cities in Los Angeles County that are subjected to horn sounding required by the engineer for up to a mile through the communities. With the addition of the BSNF locomotives on certain Metrolink lines, the noise has been exacerbated by the locomotive's five chime horn. Residents are complaining that this horn is much louder than Metrolink's normal horn, creating an unacceptable state and will be demanding a long-term solution.

Due to the ongoing investigation by the National Safety Board, Metrolink is unable to answer questions from the public regarding why these locomotives have been put into use. Communities are realizing how much safer they would be with the additional safety measures with the creation of a quiet zone.

With many quiet zones planned for Metrolink lines, I think it would be prudent to do a comprehensive study of all communities impacted by the BNSF five chime horn.

APPROVE Motion by Najarian that the Board direct the CEO to:

- A. create a comprehensive study of all communities/cities impacted by the BNSF locomotive noise factor;
- B. direct staff to work with Metrolink staff to prioritize those cities most in need of a quiet-zone;
and
- C. report back to the MTA Board in 90 days on the results of this study.

ATTACHMENT B

Los Angeles County Communities Impacted by BNSF Horn Issue (along Metro owned/Metrolink operated Right-of-Way)

Metrolink Line	Community	Distance (Miles)	No. of Crossings *	Frequency of Crossings Per Mile	Weekday Trains **	Complaints to Metrolink (H/M/L)	Metrolink Community Outreach	Metrolink Government Relations Outreach	Comments
San Bernardino	El Monte	3.1	3	1.0	40	LOW			
San Bernardino	Industry	2.4	4	1.7	40	LOW			
San Bernardino	Baldwin Park	2.5	8	3.2	40	HIGH	community meeting - 6/21/16	met with city manager 5/16	
San Bernardino	Irwindale	1.2	2	1.7	40	LOW			
San Bernardino	Covina	5.6	13	2.3	40	HIGH		council presentation - 4/19/16; will meet with city manager in August	
San Bernardino	San Dimas	2.5	4	1.6	40	HIGH	community meeting - 6/2/16	council presentation 4/12/16 and 4/26/16 and met with asst. city manager; will meet with council in Aug/Sept	within Lone Hill to White Double Track project limits
San Bernardino	La Verne	2.3	7	3.0	40	MEDIUM		met with city manager 7/20/16	within Lone Hill to White Double Track project limits
San Bernardino	Pomona	1.3	5	3.8	40	MEDIUM		council presentation - 4/4/16; will meet with council Aug/Sept	
San Bernardino	Claremont	1.8	5	2.8	40	HIGH	community meeting - 6/23/16	council presentation - 4/12/16; will meet with council in Aug/Sept	Has formed council subcommittee on quiet zones
Ventura County	Los Angeles	17.6	19	1.1	48	MEDIUM			
Ventura County	Burbank	3.0	5	1.7	48	MEDIUM			<u>pursuing quiet zone along Ventura County Line (Buena Vista/Vanowen)</u>
Antelope Valley/Ventura	Glendale	4.4	11	2.5	83	MEDIUM			intends to file Notice Of Intent (NOI) for quiet zone with FRA in late 2016
Antelope Valley/Ventura	Burbank	3.8	3	0.8	83	MEDIUM			
Antelope Valley	Los Angeles	11.7	14	1.2	35	MEDIUM			within Brighton to Roxford Double Track project limits
Antelope Valley	San Fernando	1.3	4	3.1	35	LOW			within Brighton to Roxford Double Track project limits
Antelope Valley	Santa Clarita	12.6	13	1.0	35	LOW			
Antelope Valley	LA County (unincorporated)	28.2	19	0.7	35	MEDIUM			
Antelope Valley	Palmdale	5.6	5	0.9	35	MEDIUM			
Antelope Valley	Lancaster	3.6	3	0.8	35	LOW			
All ***	Los Angeles	2.8	5	1.8	310	LOW			

TOTAL: 117.3 152 1.3

* Includes BOTH public and private crossings
 ** Includes Metrolink, Amtrak AND freight trains
 *** River Corridor (east and west bank)