



COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
PENNSYLVANIA PUBLIC UTILITY COMMISSION
COMMONWEALTH KEYSTONE BUILDING
400 NORTH STREET
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA 17120
March 24, 2026

A-2025-3055108

TO ALL PARTIES OF RECORD

Application of the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for approval to alter the crossing where Water Street (DOT 984 557 R) crosses, above grade, and the Riverfront Park Trail (DOT 924 938 R) crosses, at grade, track owned by Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group in the City of Pittston and Borough of West Pittston, Luzerne County and the allocation of costs incident thereto

To Whom It May Concern:

By application received by the Commission on May 12, 2025, the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Department) is seeking approval to replace the existing bridge where Water Street (DOT 984 557 R) crosses, above grade, and the Riverfront Trail (DOT 924 938 R) crosses, at grade, track owned by Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group in the City of Pittston, and Borough of West Pittston, Luzerne County.

A field investigation and conference was arranged by a Commission staff engineer and held at the site of the crossing on July 9, 2025. Representatives of PPL Electric Utilities, the City of Pittston, the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and the Department were in attendance. Although notified by letter dated June 16, 2025, there were no representatives from Pennsylvania American Water, Comcast Cable Communications Management, LLC, Frontier Communications, City of Pittston Sewer, Verizon, Wyoming Valley Sanitary Authority, or UGI Utilities, Inc in attendance.

At the field conference it was noted that the subject bridge carries a two-lane bidirectional paved roadway over a single track owned by Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group located at the southeastern end of the structure. The structure also crosses over the existing Riverfront Trail which crosses the track at-grade. In addition, the bridge spans the Susquehanna River with the northwestern side located in the Borough of West Pittston, and the southeastern side located in the City of Pittston.

The bridge was previously posted for a weight limit of 20 tons; however, at the field conference it was noted that the structure and sidewalk was closed to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The Department, municipalities and county are hereby reminded that a change in use of a Commission jurisdictional bridge, such as changing a load posting on a bridge, closing a bridge, restricting pedestrian traffic, etc., requires affirmation or approval from the Commission. The Commission will affirm the closure of the existing bridge to all vehicular and pedestrian traffic under this Secretarial Letter.

The structure will be fully replaced, including superstructure and substructure, and upon completion, the new structure will serve as a detour to redirect traffic from the nearby State Route 0011 (Fort Jenkins Bridge) to allow its replacement.

Preliminary plans submitted with the application show the existing bridge as a five (5) span simple parker through truss bridge having 5 stone masonry piers. Span 1 of the structure has a normal clear span of 192.96 feet, spans 2 through 4 have normal clear spans of 193.48 feet and span 5 has a normal clear span of 193.88 feet. The curb-to-curb of the existing structure is listed as 21 feet, with a truss chord to truss chord width of 24-feet. Concrete curbs and metal guide rail are located on both sides of the travel lanes protecting the truss chords, and a 5 foot 4-inch-wide sidewalk with a 1-foot-wide pedestrian railing is located on the northernmost side of the structure.

The existing structure has a vertical clearance of 19 feet 4 inches from the underside of the structure to the top of the track of the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority. The minimum side (horizontal) clearance is listed as 13 feet 3 inches as measured from the centerline of track to a safety fence around the Riverfront trail. The existing vertical clearance of 19 feet 4 inches is less than the Commission's minimum requirement of 22 feet. Since this clearance has not been memorialized in a previous Commission Order and/or Secretarial Letter this Secretarial Letter will serve as a temporary exemption from the Commission's minimum side clearance required by 52 Pa. Code, Section 33.122 until the point in time when the existing structure is demolished as part of the subject proceeding.

The Department plans to replace the entire superstructure and substructure of the existing bridge and construct a six (6) span composite steel multi girder bridge with 5 reinforced concrete piers. The total length of the structure from centerline of bearing to centerline of bearing is shown as 1024 feet, consisting of two 56.25-foot spans (span 1 and 6), two 205.75-foot spans (span 2 and 5), and two 250.00-foot spans (span 3 and 4). The structure will have a curb-to-curb width of 32.00 feet and out-to-out of 50.33 feet. There will be two 11-foot travel lanes both with 5-foot shoulders, two 8-foot raised curbed sidewalks, and a 1-foot 2 inch wide vertical wall barrier on either side of the structure with ornamental lighting mounted on top of the barriers. Protective fencing will be mounted on top of the outside barriers within span 6 over the railroad tracks and riverfront trail. Pedestrian alcoves will be located over each pier on each side of the bridge to provide an overlook area for pedestrians.

The proposed minimum vertical (overhead) clearance will be increased to 23-feet 9-inch from the top of the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority track to the low chord of the structure, and the minimum horizontal (side) clearance will be 24 feet 11 inches from proposed pier number 5 to the centerline of the tracks.

Additionally, the existing Riverfront trail crossing (DOT 924 938 R) will be improved as part of the structure replacement by the addition of ADA accessible ramps, a new crossing surface and signage. The Commission will order final plans detailing the alterations to the trail in this letter. The trail will be closed during construction.

Since the structure is currently closed, and under an existing detour, the applicant, county and/or municipalities will be responsible for maintaining the existing detour until the existing bridge is fully replaced.

Preliminary design drawings were included with the application; however, the Commission will order detailed, final signed, sealed construction and structural plans to be submitted to all parties for review and to this Commission for approval.

The bridge replacement project is estimated to cost approximately \$50,000,000 and will be funded by state and federal funding.

The existing structure is owned by Luzerne County, and they will maintain ownership and maintenance of the proposed structure including bridge inspection, snow ice and debris removal from the roadway and sidewalks and lighting including the electrical costs to energize the bridge lighting on the structure. The City of Pittston has agreed to maintenance of the trail crossing and improvements.

The Commission has tentatively established jurisdiction of the entire structure extending from station 108+41.57 to 117+92.75 as shown on preliminary plans submitted with the application.

In conjunction with the subject bridge replacement project, it may be necessary for the Commission to appropriate certain portions of railroad property to accommodate construction of the project. If required, the Department is advised to submit to the Commission for consideration final right-of-way plans with property types, metes and bounds descriptions and the grantor corporate name and address to be recorded under.

There are multiple utilities attached to the existing structure including a gas line that will be relocated and aerial utilities that will remain on the new structure. Alterations required to public utilities in public right-of-way will be made by the utility at its initial cost and expense.

If a temporary at-grade railroad crossing is necessary during construction for contractor use, the Department, at their sole cost and expense, will work with the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and the RJ Corman Railroad Group to ensure flagging and/or temporary warning signals and crossing surfaces are in place and utilized for access across the railroad facilities.

Temporary underdeck shielding should be used, if necessary, to protect rail traffic below.

The applicant has certified that a copy of the application has been served on each party in interest and none has advised that it objects to the issuance of a Secretarial Letter approving the application. The Borough of West Pittston and R.J Corman Railroad Group were omitted as a party of record in the initial application, however they will be added as a party of record in this Secretarial Letter.

Upon full consideration of the matters involved, we determine that it is not necessary to schedule a hearing in this proceeding at this time and that issuance of a Secretarial Letter without hearing is proper since the County has agreed to construct the project at its sole cost and expense, and none of the parties has expressed any objections to the proposal.

The Commission issues this Secretarial Letter in accordance with Section 2702 of the Public Utility Code and finds that the alteration of the crossing is necessary and proper for the service, accommodation, convenience, or safety of the public.

The alteration of the subject crossing as proposed by the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is approved as herein directed:

1. The subject caption be revised as shown herein.
2. The Borough of West Pittston be added as a party of record hereto.
3. The R.J. Corman Railroad Group be added as a party of record hereto
4. The public crossing where Water Street (DOT 984 557 R) crosses, above grade and the Riverfront Trail ,(DOT 924 938 R) crosses, at grade, track owned by Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority, and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group, in the City of Pittston and the Borough of West Pittston, Luzerne County be altered as herein directed.
5. The closing of the bridge to all vehicle and pedestrian traffic is hereby affirmed. Luzerne County and/or the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania provide to the Commission the notification and bridge closing recommendation letter as prescribed in the Pennsylvania Department of Transportation Bridge Safety Inspection Manual (Publication 238).
6. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at its sole cost and expense, and prior to the start of construction, prepare and submit to this Commission for approval and to all parties of record for examination, complete detailed signed and sealed final construction and bridge structural plans, a situation plan for the proposed trail crossing surface and improvements, and if necessary, right-of-way plans with metes and bounds descriptions and grantor corporate name and address to be recorded under, for any railroad property for the Commission to appropriate.
7. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at its sole cost and expense, demolish the existing structure where Water Street crosses, above grade, track of Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group and construct a new structure generally in accordance with the approved plans and this Secretarial Letter.

8. Luzerne County, City of Pittston, and the Borough of West Pittston continue to work together to maintain the existing bridge and sidewalk closure signs and detours at the Water Street bridge location until construction begins for its replacement.
9. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to establish and maintain all traffic controls that may be required to properly and safely accommodate vehicular and pedestrian traffic during the time the crossing project is being constructed.
10. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and do all work required, if necessary, to install and maintain temporary underdeck shielding between the beams where warranted, to protect rail and other traffic below.
11. A temporary exemption from the Commission's minimum vertical clearance requirements of 52 Pa. Code §33.122 be and is hereby granted, in this particular instance, for a vertical clearance of 19 feet 4 inches from the centerline of the track to the existing structure before and during construction until the point in time that the existing structure is demolished as part of the subject proceeding.
12. Any operating railroads over the subject line, issue appropriate notice warning its employees of the restrictive clearances herein, all in accordance with its standard operation practice.
13. The City of Pittston, at the sole cost and expense of the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, install ADA upgrades, a new crossing surface and signage to the existing Riverfront Trail public crossing (DOT 924 938 R).
14. Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and RJ Corman Railroad Group, at the sole cost and expense of the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, furnish all material and perform all work relating to its facilities which may be required as incidental to the performance of the proposed work and furnish any watchmen, flagmen, inspectors and/or engineering services that may be deemed necessary to protect the railroad's operations or facilities during the time the facilities are being installed.
15. Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and RJ Corman Railroad Group, at its sole cost and expense, work together to establish a United States Department of Transportation DOT highway/rail crossing numbers to be inventoried and reported in the state and federal highway/rail grade crossing databases.
16. Any relocation of, changes in or removal of any adjacent structures, equipment or other facilities of any non-carrier public utility company or municipal authority located within the limits of the public right-of-way, and within the limits of this Commission's jurisdiction, which may be required as incidental to the execution of the crossing project, be made by said public utility company or municipal authority at its initial cost and expense, and in such manner as will not interfere with the construction of the project.

17. All costs, which are to be reimbursed by the Department of Transportation consistent with this Secretarial Letter, shall be reimbursed pursuant to the provisions of 23 C.F.R. Parts 140 and 646. The aforesaid Federal reimbursement shall not supersede, delay or, in any manner, postpone the effect of any paragraph contained in this or any related Secretarial Letter or Order.

18. This Secretarial Letter is without prejudice to the right of any party to recover all or part of any costs incurred by said party in compliance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter, in accordance with any lawful agreement between it and any other party.

19. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at least thirty (30) days prior to the start of work, notify all parties in interest of the actual date on which work will begin.

20. Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and RJ Corman Railroad Group cooperate with the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and conduct their operations in the vicinity of the crossing, in a safe manner and under control during the time project is being constructed.

21. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania cooperate with Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and RJ Corman Railroad Group so that during construction of the project, the operations and facilities of the railroad company will not be endangered or unnecessarily impeded.

22. All work necessary to alter the public crossing be completed in a manner satisfactory to this Commission on or before December 31, 2030, and that on or before said date, Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania report to this Commission the date of actual completion of the work.

23. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at its sole cost and expense, pay all compensation for damages due to owners of property taken, injured, or destroyed by reason of the construction of the crossing in accordance with this Secretarial Letter.

24. Upon completion of construction of the proposed project, each non-carrier public utility company and municipal authority, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary thereafter to maintain its respective facilities, existing or altered, located within the limits of the improvement.

25. Upon completion of construction of the proposed project Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to maintain its tracks and any other railroad facilities, existing or altered, located within the limits of the project, and provide Luzerne County at least ten (10) business days advance notice when performing any work that may affect their facilities, as directed by this paragraph.

26. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project, Luzerne County, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary to maintain and inspect the entire bridge including the concrete deck, superstructure, substructure, wing walls, piers, bearings, approach slabs, approach guiderail, protective barriers, protective fencing, structural integrity of the sidewalks and curbing, roadway surface, and drainage facilities of the subject bridge, and any other ancillary features of the improvement constructed in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter, and provide the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority, RJ Corman Railroad Group, City of Pittston and Borough of West Pittston at least ten (10) business days advance notice when performing any work that may affect their facilities, as directed by this paragraph.

27. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project, Luzerne County, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work for the removal of snow, ice and debris from the travel lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the proposed structure, as constructed in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter.

28. Upon completion of the alteration of the subject crossing, Luzerne County, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary thereafter to maintain the bridge lighting, including the electrical costs to energize the bridge lighting, constructed as part of the alteration.

29. Upon completion of the alteration of the subject crossing, City of Pittston, at its sole cost and expense, furnish all material and perform all work necessary thereafter to maintain the Riverfront trail crossing (DOT 924 938 R) and all improvements constructed as part of the alteration.

30. Upon completion of the work herein directed, and upon a written request by any party hereto, this proceeding be scheduled for a hearing at a time and a place assigned by this Commission, upon due notice to all parties, to receive evidence relative to the allocation of initial costs incurred, if any, by any of the parties, and any other matters relevant to this proceeding.

The Parties are reminded that failure to comply with this or any Order or Secretarial Letter in this proceeding may result in an enforcement action seeking civil penalties and/or other sanctions pursuant to 66 Pa. C.S. § 3301.

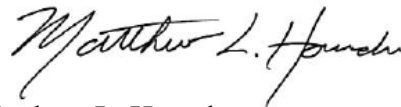
All formal documents must be filed with the Secretary of the Commission. Documents must be eFiled, mailed or hand delivered. All filings should be addressed to the Secretary, PA Public Utility Commission, 400 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120. The Commission will not accept documents delivered by fax or by e-mail. Parties are encouraged to file formal documents by eFiling with the Secretary of the Commission by opening an eFiling account through the Commission's website (the account is free of charge) and accepting eservice at <https://www.puc.pa.gov/filing-resources/efiling/>.

If your filing contains confidential material, you are required to file by overnight delivery to ensure the timely filing of your submission. There are certain filings that cannot be eFiled, such as filings containing confidential or proprietary material. These must be submitted to the Secretary by overnight delivery, priority, or certified mail to allow tracking of your filing.

If you are dissatisfied with the resolution of this matter, you may, as set forth in 52 Pa. Code §§ 1.31 and 5.44, file a Petition for Reconsideration from Staff Action (Petition) with the Commission within twenty (20) days of the date of this letter. The Petition shall be eFiled with the Secretary of the Commission or sent to: Secretary, PA Public Utility Commission, 400 North Street, Harrisburg, PA 17120, and must be filed within twenty (20) days, or if no timely request is made, the action will be deemed to be a final action of the Commission.

The Petition MUST include: (1) a written statement (divided into numbered paragraphs) outlining the reasons for the request; (2) the case docket number (it is provided for you at the top right-hand corner of this letter); (3) the party on whose behalf the petition is made; (4) a Certificate of Service on the other parties of record; and (5) a Verification with original signature in accordance with 52 Pa. Code § 1.36.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew L. Homsher". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "M".

Matthew L. Homsher
Secretary