



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

May 26, 2026

A-2025-3058979

TO ALL PARTIES OF RECORD

Application of the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania for approval of the alteration of the crossing where State Route 2005 (Blackman Street) crosses, above grade, track owned by the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group (DOT 361 582 C) by replacing the existing bridge in the City of Wilkes Barre, Luzerne County

To Whom It May Concern:

By application filed with the Commission on November 26, 2025, the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (Department) is seeking approval to replace the existing bridge where State Route 2005 (Blackman Street) crosses, above grade, a single track owned by the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority (Authority) and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group (RJ Corman) in the City of Wilkes Barre Luzerne County.

A field investigation and conference was arranged by a Commission staff engineer and held at the site of the crossing on February 18, 2026. Representatives of the City of Wilkes Barre, RJ Corman, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania American Water and the Department were in attendance. Although notified by letters dated January 9, 2026, and February 3, 2026 (the meeting was rescheduled due to weather), there were no representatives from UGI Utilities, Inc., PPL, or the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority in attendance.

Existing structure data submitted with the application and structure plans show the subject bridge (BRKEY 24069), carrying State Route 2005 (Blackman Street) as a prestressed concrete adjacent box beam structure having three spans. The spans measure 21-foot 6 -inches (span 1), 43-feet 10-inches (span 2), and 30-feet 6-inches (span 3) in length. The structure carries two 16-foot travel lanes, two 5-foot raised curbed sidewalks and two 1 foot 3-inch concrete barriers with metal railings mounted on top on each outside edge of the bridge. The structure has an out-to-out of 44 feet 6 inches. The structure is supported by two reinforced concrete piers and concrete abutments with flared wingwalls. An online Department database lists the 2026 ADT as 9,979 vehicles. The database also lists the structure as being built in 1965 and in overall poor condition. The structure has an existing minimum vertical underclearance of 18.5 feet from the top of the track bottom of the structure. The minimum horizontal clearances are listed as 12 feet 6 inches-feet from the centerline of track to the westernmost pier, and 26-feet from the centerline of track to the easternmost pier.

The Department described the details of the proposed alterations at the February 18, 2026, meeting, which include the replacement of the entire superstructure and substructure and the removal of the piers. Preliminary plans submitted with the application show the proposed structure will be a single span, composite, prestressed concrete adjacent box beam structure having a span length of 45-feet center-to-center of bearing with two 25-foot approach slabs on both approaches. The proposed structure will carry two 10-foot travel lanes, two 6-foot shoulders, two 5-foot-2.5-inch-wide raised curbed sidewalks, and 1-foot-wide concrete barriers with safety fencing mounted on top on both sides of the structure. The out-to-out of the structure will be 44-feet 5-inches and the curb to curb 32-feet. The structure will be supported by new reinforced concrete abutments with wingwalls. The proposed minimum vertical underclearance will be 19-feet from the top of rail to the bottom of the proposed structure, and the horizontal (side) clearances will be 20-feet 2-inches minimum to abutments 1 and 2.

Both the existing and proposed minimum vertical underclearances, 18.5-feet and 19-feet, respectively, are less than the Commission's minimum requirement of 22 feet. Since both clearances are less than the Commission's minimum requirement this Secretarial Letter will grant an exemption from the Commission's minimum vertical (overhead) clearance as required by 52 Pa. Code, Section 33.121 for both the existing and proposed structures. The operating railroad, RJ Corman, has indicated by electronic mail that they do not object to these clearances.

The Commission has tentatively established jurisdiction along State Route 2005 (Blackman Street) over those portions of the project extending from station 67+00 to 69+00 and the full footprint of the proposed and existing bridge and its embankments as shown on preliminary plans submitted with the application.

The Department stated that the installation of the proposed structure will require full road closure and detour throughout construction. The Department agreed to the design and implementation of the detour at its sole cost and expense, which will remain in place for a full construction season. The Department also agrees to provide all material and perform all work necessary to construct the project.

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

There are no utilities attached to the existing structure; however, some aerial utility facilities may need to be relocated to facilitate the replacement of the bridge. Alterations required to public utilities in public right-of-way will be made by the utility at its initial cost and expense.

The Department has indicated that a temporary at-grade railroad crossing may be 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.

The bridge replacement project will be funded with federal and state funds. The estimated total cost for the construction project is \$2,000,000.

Upon completion of the replacement structure, the Department will maintain the entire superstructure and substructure. The City of Wilkes Barre has agreed to maintain the sidewalks and the roadway travel lanes for the removal of snow, ice and debris.

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.

The applicant has certified that a copy of the application has been served on each party in interest and none have advised that it objects to the issuance of a Secretarial Letter approving the application.

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 the issuance of a Secretarial Letter without a hearing is proper since the Department 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 crossing where State Route 2005 (Blackman Street) crosses, above grade, a single track owned by the Luzerne County Redevelopment Authority and operated thereon by RJ Corman Railroad Group in the City of Wilkes Barre, Luzerne County be altered as herein directed.
3. 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 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.
4. 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 accommodate highway and pedestrian traffic during the time the crossing project is being constructed.
5. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at its sole cost and expense, demolish the existing superstructure, abutments and piers, and construct the new replacement structure in accordance with the approved plans and this Secretarial Letter.

6. A temporary exemption from the Commission's minimum vertical (overhead) clearance requirements of 52 Pa. Code § 33.121 be and is hereby granted, in this particular instance, for a vertical clearance of 18.5 feet from the top of track to the bottom of the existing structure before and during construction until the point in time that the existing structure is demolished as part of the subject proceeding.

7. An exemption from the Commission's minimum vertical (overhead) clearance requirements of 52 Pa. Code § 33.121 be and is hereby granted, in this particular instance, for a vertical clearance of 19 feet from the top of track to the bottom of the constructed proposed structure.

8. 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.

9. RJ Corman Railroad Group, at its sole cost and expense, furnish construction, engineering and inspection services as required as a result of the proposed work, and furnish and maintain flagmen and watchmen as required to protect its operations during the time work is being performed across, above and adjacent to its tracks.

10. 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 public right-of-way, 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.

11. Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, at least sixty (60) days prior to the start of work, notify all parties in interest of the actual date on which work will begin.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. Construction of the bridge project be completed in a manner satisfactory to this Commission on or before December 31, 2029, 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project RJ Corman Railroad Group, 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, within the limits of the crossing and provide the City of Wilkes Barre and the Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania at least ten (10) business days advance notice when performing any work as directed by this paragraph.

20. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project, Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 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, 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 City of Wilkes Barre and RJ Corman Railroad Group at least ten (10) business days advance notice when performing any work that may affect their facilities, as directed by this paragraph.

21. Upon completion of the construction of the proposed project, Department of Transportation of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, 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 on both sides of the proposed structure, as constructed in accordance with the provisions of this Secretarial Letter.

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

23. 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,



Matthew L. Homsher
Secretary