

CPUC Gives Pasadena Blue Line a Temporary Go-Ahead

(Nov. 7, 2001) The California Public Utilities Commission late last week gave a temporary go-ahead for construction to proceed on the Pasadena Blue Line, despite protests by neighborhood activists opposed to at-grade crossings on portions of the line.

The CPUC commissioner who made the ruling warned, however, that the Pasadena Blue Line Construction Authority was taking a "risk" until the full commission had an opportunity to consider the decision.

The ruling, according to Authority CEO Rick Thorpe, "allows us to move forward in the way that we had always planned, and it's going to save taxpayers between \$6 million and \$12 million."

He and others had warned that halting construction would put the project behind schedule and jeopardize the July 2003 opening date.

At a public hearing conducted, Monday, by the CPUC, MTA Chairman John Fasana testified in support of the Pasadena Blue Line and said, "The project's design is responsible and safe."

He noted that, while construction of some planned grade separations on the 13.7-mile light-rail line have been funded under Proposition A, "new grade separations would not be able to utilize these local revenue sources."

Fasana added that, "The ability to connect the communities of Los Angeles County, the relief to congestion, and the benefits to the underserved transit-dependent are priorities we can ill afford to ignore."

In an appearance before the public hearing on Tuesday, CEO Roger Snoble said the Pasadena Blue Line "will continue the MTA's efforts to improve air quality in Southern California by reducing the number of cars driven daily between Pasadena and downtown Los Angeles. The addition of the (line) to the Los Angeles rail system will improve accessibility for those who live, work or travel through Los Angeles."

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