

Response to Community Concerns about Rail Activity in Shafter, CA

On February 13, 2020, CARB staff participated in an AB 617 community tour in Shafter, CA. One of the steering committee members talked to CARB staff about their concern relating to BNSF rail activity in the area. Community members are concerned that when BNSF does switch work, the rail crossing is blocked, which causes traffic to back up on a regular basis in the community. Community members asked CARB staff if there was anything CARB could do to address their concern about the blocked crossing and resulting idling cars.

CARB staff looked into what options are available to address the Shafter community concerns:

- While CARB staff do not have authority to regulate activity at rail crossings, staff can talk to BNSF to see what they can do to reduce impact on the community next time CARB and BNSF meet.
 - Potentially adjust times when they conduct switching activity (outside of rush hour, or at night).
- The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has a department that deals with activity at locomotive crossings, and has specific regulations relating to switching activities that block public rail crossings. If community members are interested, CARB staff can reach out to CPUC staff to discuss how they can help.
 - CPUC's General Order Number 135 says in part:
 - "SWITCHING MOVEMENTS - Switching over public grade crossings should be avoided whenever reasonably possible. If not reasonably possible, such crossings must be cleared frequently to allow a vehicle or pedestrian to pass and must not be occupied continuously for longer than 10 minutes unless no vehicle or pedestrian is waiting at the crossing.