

CALIFORNIA TRANSPORTATION COMMISSION  
San Pedro Terminal Island Bridge  
(Vincent Thomas Toll Bridge)  
Elimination of Tolls

**Resolution G-99-29**

- 1.1 WHEREAS the San Pedro Terminal Island (Vincent Thomas) Toll Bridge is located on Highway 47 between San Pedro and Terminal Island in Los Angeles County, and
- 1.2 WHEREAS Section 30684 of the Streets and Highways (S & H) Code states that upon repaying all accounts from which moneys had been transferred under Section 30682, the bridge shall thereafter be maintained and operated free of tolls or the rate of tolls shall thereafter be so adjusted as to provide a fund not to exceed the amount necessary for the proper operation, maintenance, and insurance of the toll bridge under economical management, and
- 1.3 WHEREAS the amount owed to the State Highway Account from Section 30682 will be repaid by December 1999 as required by S & H Code Section 30684, and
- 1.4 WHEREAS Streets and Highways Code Section 30685 mandates a \$15 million contribution to the Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Account from the toll revenue account to cover its fair share of the seismic retrofit costs, and
- 1.5 WHEREAS the funds remaining in the Toll Bridge Account will continue to accumulate interest until needed for the Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Account contribution and are expected to total \$15 million by the time the seismic retrofit program will need those funds, and
- 1.6 WHEREAS the cost of bridge maintenance and insurance is paid from the State Highway Account per S & H Code Section 188.3, and
- 1.7 WHEREAS current estimates of the Toll Bridge Account indicate that the annual operational cost of the bridge will equal or exceed the annual revenues by Fiscal Year 2000-01, meaning toll revenues would not cover the cost of collection.
- 2.1 NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that, all conditions of Section 30684 having been met, the collection of tolls on the Vincent Thomas Toll Bridge will be discontinued on a date to be determined by the Secretary of the Business, Transportation, and Housing Agency, but no later than January 1, 2000.

Alcoholic Beverage Control  
Department of Corporations  
Department of Financial Institutions  
California Highway Patrol  
California Housing Finance Agency  
Department of Housing & Community Development

Department of Motor Vehicles  
Department of Real Estate  
Office of Real Estate Appraisers  
Stephen P. Teale Data Center  
Office of Traffic Safety  
Department of Transportation (Caltrans)

GRAY DAVIS  
*Governor*

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET  
*Secretary*



**BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY**

November 3, 1999

Mr. Edward B. Sylvester  
Chairman  
California Transportation Commission  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chairman Sylvester:

The San Pedro Terminal Island Bridge (Vincent Thomas Bridge), located on Highway 47 between San Pedro and Terminal Island in Los Angeles County, was opened to traffic on November 15, 1963. The cost of construction was \$21 million and was funded from bond sales and transfers from the State Highway Account and County and City of Los Angeles.

The bridge is operated as a toll facility with tolls collected on the westbound direction only. Toll rates are adopted by the California Transportation Commission and are based on the total number of axles on the vehicles crossing the bridge. The current toll rate is 50 cents for automobiles (2 axles) and generates approximately \$2.6 million in annual revenues. A financial analysis of the toll revenue account indicates that by Fiscal Year (FY) 2000-01, the costs associated with the collection of tolls will equal, or exceed, the revenues generated. Revenues are not anticipated to increase in the future and collecting tolls at the current rate is not cost effective; conversely, raising tolls may not increase the revenues since the public may select alternate "cost-free" routes.

It is a key goal of the Davis Administration to seek ways to improve the quality of lives of our working and traveling public. The elimination of the tolls, by CTC administrative action, will benefit our citizens by minimizing delays and expediting the movement of people, goods and services. It is good government practice to eliminate unnecessary taxes and fees. If these tolls



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are not eliminated, it is estimated that approximately \$21 million would be collected in tolls over the next eight years, which will not even cover the estimated \$23 million that it would cost to collect them. Furthermore, installation of a new Electronic Toll Collection (ETC) system at an approximate cost of \$1.7 million is mandated if toll collection continues. Incurring this expense, which would be paid from toll revenues, will be avoided by elimination of the tolls.

Removing the tolls is also a fiscally sound decision. As of June 30, 1999, the toll revenue account balance was approximately \$14 million. The account has two outstanding financial obligations: \$6.2 million is owed to the State Highway Account (SHA) for construction and betterment of the bridge and approaches. The Streets and Highways Code Section 30684 mandates that this amount is paid before the tolls can be removed. More recently, Senate Bill 60 mandated a \$15 million contribution to the Toll Bridge Seismic Retrofit Account (TBSRA) from the toll revenue account.

The amount owed to the SHA can be repaid by December 31, 1999 clearing the way for removal of the tolls effective January 1, 2000. The funds remaining in the toll revenue account will thereafter continue to accumulate interest until needed for the TBSRA contribution.

I want to thank Assemblyman Alan Lowenthal and the Commission for their efforts on this important issue and recommend that the Commission take administrative action to eliminate collection of the San Pedro Terminal Island Bridge (Vincent Thomas Bridge) tolls effective January 1, 2000.

Sincerely,



MARIA CONTRERAS-SWEET

Secretary

Business, Transportation and Housing Agency

Assembly  
California Legislature



ALAN LOWENTHAL  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, FIFTY-FOURTH DISTRICT

Representing the communities of Avalon, Hawaiian Gardens, Lomita, Long Beach,  
Palos Verdes Estates, Rancho Palos Verdes, Rolling Hills, Rolling Hills Estates, San Pedro, Signal Hill

September 9, 1999

REC'D BY CTC

SEP 14 1999

Mr. Edward Sylvester, Chairman  
California Transportation Commission  
1120 N Street  
Sacramento, California 95814

Dear Mr. Sylvester:

I urge the California Transportation Commission to remove the toll on the Vincent Thomas Bridge as soon as possible. Since construction of the bridge, those wishing to travel from Long Beach to San Pedro have been forced to pay a toll in order to pay off debt incurred for its construction and subsequent earthquake retrofit. However, it has come to my attention that recent inquiries have led the California Department of Transportation to determine that the cost of toll collection has become so expensive that it has rendered collection efforts to be not worth the cost of collecting the toll.

Built in 1963 at a cost of \$21 million, the bridge is an essential conduit to travel between the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, the 3<sup>rd</sup> largest seaport complex in the world. It is estimated that over 5,600,000 annual toll transactions occur on the Vincent Thomas, which operates collection 24 hours a day. Still, the collected revenue amounts to only \$2,700,000. Thus, when the cost of collecting the toll is subtracted from the revenues, it is apparent that the toll is revenue neutral or at best a mere two-cents on the collected dollar is realized. In short, the funds collected from passing motorists are going to pay for toll collection, not to retire construction or earthquake retrofit debt.

Again, I encourage you to consider removal of the toll on the Vincent Thomas Bridge. In reviewing this issue, I have learned that in order to remove the toll on the Vincent Thomas Bridge legislation may be required. If this is the case, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 319-2054. I am confident that after reviewing this matter, the Commission will uphold its long tradition of ensuring that California's transportation issues are addressed in a common sense manner.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Alan Lowenthal".

Alan Lowenthal  
Assemblymember, 54<sup>th</sup> District

