

Date of Hearing: April 27, 2015

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

AB 652 (Cooley) – As Introduced February 24, 2015

**SUBJECT:** State Highway Route 16: relinquishment: County of Sacramento

**SUMMARY:** Authorizes the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to relinquish a portion of State Route (SR) 16 between east of the City of Sacramento boundary and west of Grant Line Road to the County of Sacramento. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Declares the intent of the Legislature that the County of Sacramento notify and consult with the Amador County Transportation Commission (ACTC), the Counties of Amador, Calaveras, and Alpine, the Cities of Plymouth, Amador City, Sutter Creek, and Jackson and other relevant parties about the proposed relinquishment of SR 16 to the County of Sacramento.
- 2) Authorizes the CTC to relinquish the portion of SR 16 that is located within the unincorporated area of that county, east of the City of Sacramento boundary and west of Grant Line Road, if the County agrees to accept it.
- 3) Requires that the relinquishment become effective on the date following the county recorder's recordation of the relinquishment, at which time it will cease to become a state highway.
- 4) Requires that the relinquished portion of SR 16 be ineligible for future adoption as a state highway.
- 5) Requires the County of Sacramento to install and maintain signs in its jurisdiction directing motorists to the continuation of SR 16.
- 6) Requires that the County of Sacramento maintain the designated truck route for the relinquished portion of SR 16.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Defines SR 16 as an eligible interregional route.
- 2) Defines a "state highway" as any roadway that is acquired, laid out, constructed, improved, or maintained as a state highway pursuant to constitutional or legislative authorization.
- 3) Statutorily identifies state highway system routes.
- 4) Specifies that it is the intent of the Legislature that the prescribed routes of the state highway system connect communities and regions of the state and that they serve the state's economy by connecting centers of commerce, industry, agriculture, mineral wealth, and recreation.
- 5) Authorizes the relinquishment of a segment of SR 16 between the Sacramento city limit and west of Watt Avenue.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** A relinquishment is the act and process of legally transferring the property rights, title, liability, and maintenance responsibility of a state highway (or portion of a state highway), or park-and-ride lot to another entity. The removal of a highway or associated facility, either in whole or in part, from the State Highway System requires that the Legislature authorize the CTC to take action, at which time the CTC votes to approve or deny the relinquishment request.

Relinquishments are typically initiated when a local jurisdiction approaches the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) asking to take over a state highway or portion, thereof. The initial step in the relinquishment process is for Caltrans to evaluate whether or not the relinquishment is appropriate. To determine whether the relinquishment is appropriate, Caltrans produces a Relinquishment Assessment Report (RAR). Specifically, the RAR is an internal decision document that provides Caltrans information upon which to base its decision whether or not to relinquish the state route or route segment.

The RAR guidelines typically contain certain elements including: the reason the local jurisdiction is requesting the relinquishment, the planned corridor concepts, and recommendations for the route's development. In fleshing out these elements, the RAR will identify important information including the primary origins and destinations for travel on the route segment with respect to interregional and regional trips, issues that could negatively impact interregional or regional travel and connectivity, if the relinquishment is expected to cause diversion of interregional and regional trips onto other state routes or local arterials, compatibility issues for adjoining jurisdictions that would be created, actions that may be needed to advise interregional travelers on connecting routes, and adjacent local agency positions on the relinquishment.

Sacramento County contends that projected growth along the SR 16 corridor will make it necessary to conduct roadway improvements. The author indicates that given the fact that Caltrans has no plans in the foreseeable future to make corridor improvements (beyond routine maintenance), that relinquishment of the route to local control would expedite completion of roadway improvements and allow those improvements to proceed in concert with local land use development.

SR 16 is a statutorily-defined interregional route and, therefore, has potentially greater significance to the state highway system than lesser routes for which relinquishments tend to proceed without controversy. In fact, it is precisely because SR 16 is an interregional route that the ACTC opposes the relinquishment. ACTC, along with the Rural County Representatives of California (RCRC) argue that SR 16 is a vital interregional connecting highway. They contend that it is important to safeguard the route's "flow times" and they are concerned that Sacramento County's planned development of the area, including the planned improvements to SR 16, will adversely affect drivers traveling to and from Amador County.

In its study and evaluation of the proposed relinquishment, Caltrans acknowledged that it has no plans to improve this segment of SR 16 in the foreseeable future. Furthermore, the department concluded that, given that the developments alongside the route will inevitably increase, it is appropriate to relinquish the route segment so that the Sacramento County can proactively

improve the roadway in advance of the planned developments. If the route is not relinquished, Caltrans surmises that it will be difficult and costly to retroactively complete improvements needed to serve the development.

These arguments, however, do not assuage the opposition's concerns and they are seeking amendments to the bill that would impose conditions on the relinquishment and restrictions on Sacramento County's planned improvements. Specifically, ACTC's proposed amendments would condition the relinquishment and require Sacramento County to, among other things, administer the operation and maintenance of the highway in a way that is consistent with professional traffic engineering standards that are applicable to interregional routes, ensure traffic studies are performed to substantiate decisions that may affect interregional travel, and fund improvements to certain roadways (not located in Sacramento County) to ensure connectivity to nearby SR 50.

*Committee concerns:* Understandably, ACTC and RCRC are concerned for the impact that encroaching urban development will have on Amador County residents and visitors who use SR 16. But as "unfair" as ACTC views Sacramento County's planned development, which made the relinquishment request necessary, the idea that a neighboring county could impose the magnitude of conditions that ACTC is proposing on Sacramento County is unreasonable. Furthermore, development in Sacramento County is going to happen regardless of the relinquishment, and Amador residents will be impacted. It makes more sense that the development be served by a planned, thoughtful transportation network rather than a hodgepodge relic of a previously rural highway.

*Related legislation:* The administration is proposing a budget trailer bill to, among other things, establish an administrative process to relinquish state highways.

*Previous legislation:* AB 1957 (Dickinson), Chapter 335, Statutes of 2014, authorized the CTC to relinquish segments of SR 16 in the City of Sacramento as well as in the unincorporated portion of Sacramento County. Earlier versions of AB 1957 included the segment of SR 16 (west of Watt Avenue to Grant Line Road) that is addressed in this bill however the segment, which is the subject of this bill, was deleted from AB 1957 to address concerns raised by ACTA.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

City of Sacramento  
Sacramento Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce  
Stonebridge Properties, Inc.

### **Opposition**

Amador County Transportation Commission  
Rural County Representatives of California

**Analysis Prepared by:** Victoria Alvarez / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093