

Date of Hearing: April 25, 2022

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
Laura Friedman, Chair  
ACR 148 (O'Donnell) – As Introduced February 18, 2022

**SUBJECT:** Long Beach International Gateway Bridge

**SUMMARY:** Designate the new replacement bridge as the Long Beach International Gateway Bridge.

**EXISTING LAW:** Assigns the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways. This includes the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown, but the measure requests that Caltrans determine the cost of appropriate signage consistent with requirements for the state highway system, and only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

**COMMENTS:** The connection between downtown Long Beach and Terminal Islands has been a vital part of the country's trade infrastructure as well as critical access route for commuters between the Port of Long Beach in downtown Long Beach and surrounding communities.

The first bridge with access to the island was a single railroad track built on a wooden trestle by the Salt Lake Railway. By 1908, it was clear that something more reliable was needed. That year the trestle was replaced by a 187-foot bascule drawbridge known as the "jackknife" bridge, because it opened and closed like a pocket knife.

In the mid-1930s, the jackknife bridge was removed after the Union Pacific stopped using it. For several years, there was no bridge in place, leaving the Badger Avenue Bridge (now the Henry Ford Bridge) as the only rail link to Terminal Island.

As World War II neared, the Navy needed better access to and from its station on Terminal Island. A pontoon bridge was constructed that could open and close allowing ship traffic to pass in and out of the harbor. The pontoon bridge was intended to be a temporary structure in place for six months, but was used for decades.

In the mid-1960s, construction began on the replacement of the pontoon bridge, the Gerald Desmond Bridge. The roughly 1.5-mile span, named after a former city attorney and councilman of the City of Long Beach, was completed in 1968. The bridge has served the needs of the Port and the City for many years. Increasing traffic volumes and the ravages of time began to take a toll on the bridge.

The new replacement bridge has a 205 feet clearance over the water, high enough to accommodate newer generations of efficient cargo ships. With three lanes in each direction plus safety lanes, it is wider and better able to serve the current 68,000 vehicle trips that travel over the current bridge each day, which equals about 18 million trips a year.

*According to the author,* The City of Long Beach is home to the Port of Long Beach, the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest container port in the US. The Port serves as an economic engine connecting Long Beach, California and the rest of the United States to international ports throughout the world. To meet the intense traffic needs created by port operations, the Port of Long Beach partnered with Caltrans, LA Metro, and the US Department of Transportation to construct a state of the art bridge with more lanes and a higher clearance for cargo ships passing below. Now that the bridge is complete and operational, it should carry a name that reflects the role it plays in economically connecting the City of Long Beach and the United States to the rest of the world through the Port of Long Beach. ACR 148 does that by naming this new bridge the Long Beach International Gateway Bridge.

*Committee Comments:* It is the intent of the Assembly Transportation Committee to use the Memorial Highway Naming process to honor deceased Californians who have made significant public service contributions and also to reflect the diversity of our state. Currently, most named highways in California are for fallen male public safety officers, who made the ultimate sacrifice, and for whom we are indebted. However, these names do not fully represent the wide range of types of public service contributions, as well as the gender and racial diversity of California's communities. The Assembly Transportation Committee is committed to working with the Department of Transportation in the upcoming year to improve the naming process to ensure greater equity and to better represent the diversity of California.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None of file

**Opposition**

None on file

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