

Date of Hearing: March 25, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

AB 449 (Gallagher) – As Amended March 6, 2019

SUBJECT: Local alternative transportation improvement program: Feather River crossing

SUMMARY: Authorizes specified local agencies to develop and file with the California Transportation Commission (CTC) a local alternative transportation improvement program (LATIP) as an alternative to a proposed bridge across the Feather River in Yuba City and the Counties of Yuba and Sutter that was deemed infeasible by the state. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Authorizes Yuba City, Yuba and Sutter Counties, and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) to develop and file with CTC a LATIP to resolve local transportation problems resulting from the infeasibility of planned state transportation facilities over the Feather River.
- 2) Specifies that CTC has the final authority regarding the content and approval of the proposed LATIP.
- 3) Directs CTC to allocate all proceeds from the sale of excess properties, less any reimbursements due to the federal government and costs incurred in the sale of the properties, to fund the approved LATIP.
- 4) Defines “excess properties” as those properties acquired for a project to construct planned state transportation facilities crossing the Feather River in Yuba City and Yuba and Sutter Counties that has been deemed infeasible and is no longer planned to be constructed.
- 5) Limits CTC from approving any LATIP after July 1, 2022.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Authorizes the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to acquire any real property that it considers necessary for state highway purposes.
- 2) Authorizes Caltrans, whenever it determines that any real property acquired by the state for highway purposes is no longer necessary for those purposes, to sell or exchange real property in the manner and upon terms, standards, and conditions established by CTC.
- 3) Requires Caltrans, to the greatest extent possible, to offer to sell or exchange excess real property within one year from the date that it determines the property is excess.
- 4) Generally requires state and local agencies, prior to disposing of excess lands, first to offer property for sale or lease to local public agencies, housing authorities, or redevelopment agencies within whose jurisdiction the property is located. Requires Caltrans to give priority first to entities agreeing to use the land for low or moderate-income housing then to entities for open-space purposes, school facilities construction, enterprise zone purposes, and infill opportunities, in that order.

- 5) Directs the proceeds from the sale of excess property to be deposited first to the State Highway Account and then transferred to the Transportation Debt Service Fund to pay debt service on general obligation transportation bonds.

FISCAL EFFECT: unknown

COMMENTS: Throughout the 1990's, Caltrans purchased property in Yuba and Sutter counties in order to build a third bridge across the Feather River in the Yuba City area as part of the State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP).

Currently, there are two other river crossings in the area. One is the Twin Cities Memorial Bridge, and the other is the Feather River Bridge at Colusa Avenue. These crossings are less than one mile apart, and leave much of the southern part of Yuba City underserved. Moreover, the existing two-lane Twins City Memorial Bridge has been deemed functionally obsolete. The state bridge project was proposed at Bogue Road and would have crossed the river to connect to the Feather River Parkway.

Additional roadway capacity is necessary across the Feather River to meet anticipated future travel demands. Six travel lanes are currently provided on the Twin Cities Memorial Bridge and the Feather River Bridge combined in order to meet the current travel demand of approximately 74,000 average daily trips (ADT). The travel demand is anticipated to increase to 170,000 ADT by 2035. A third bridge is necessary to accommodate this additional demand.

Caltrans has determined that it is no longer able to pursue the river crossing project and will be selling most of the property it had acquired for the project's right-of-way. If the excess property is sold as planned, the funds from the sale will return to the state and be transferred to the General Fund to pay debt service on transportation bonds.

According to the author, "AB 449 isn't just about transportation, it's also about public safety. During the disaster at Oroville Dam, thousands of people were evacuated from their homes and were forced to flee over gridlocked bridges. AB 449 represents an opportunity to address future traffic issues and avoid a potential catastrophe with a common sense solution. Ultimately, allowing locals to use these funds to pursue an alternative to the state bridge project will result in a cost-effective project that meets local needs, while avoiding the need for the state to fund such a project in the future."

Committee comments. Like this river crossing project, other projects elsewhere in the state have languished and similarly left property unused for decades. In two of these cases, legislation was enacted to facilitate the sale of the property and the return of the proceeds to the corridor for which the properties were originally purchased. Specifically, SB 791 (Corbett), Chapter 705, Statutes of 2008, authorized the use of revenues from sales of excess properties for projects in a LATIP that replaced the long-planned Hayward Bypass on State Route (SR) 238 and improvements to SR 84. More recently, SB 416 (Liu), Chapter 468, Statutes of 2013, directed the revenue from the sale of surplus properties in the SR 710 corridor in Los Angeles County to local transportation improvements.

AB 449 creates the opportunity for the local agencies to construct a transportation facility they have deemed to be critical. Only upon review and approval by CTC will these state funds be

available for this purpose. It seems reasonable to provide the local agencies the possibility to use these funds for the purpose for which they were initially intended.

Previous legislation: AB 2730 (Alejo, 2016) would have directed any revenues from the sale of properties acquired by Caltrans for a never-constructed project in Monterey County to instead fund other highway projects within the same county. This bill was vetoed by Governor Brown.

SB 416 (Liu), Chapter 468, Statutes of 2013, among other things, directed the proceeds from the sale of properties in the SR 710 corridor to the SR 710 Rehabilitation Account for the purpose of making required repairs to homes being purchased by income-qualified residents in the corridor.

SB 791 (Corbett) Chapter 705, Statutes of 2008, among other provisions, authorized proceeds from the sale of surplus property to be used to develop the local alternative transportation improvements in the SR 84 and SR 238 corridors.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Yuba City
Yuba County Supervisor Andy Vasquez
Yuba County Supervisor Gary Bradford
Yuba Sutter Chamber of Commerce

Opposition

None on file

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