

Date of Hearing: March 20, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

AB 776 (Holden) – As Amended March 15, 2023

SUBJECT: Route 210

SUMMARY: This bill requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to work with certain entities, including, but not limited to, California Indian tribes local to, or historically located along, Route 210, to identify appropriate locations for signs to recognize tribal lands along Route 210 in Los Angeles and San Bernardino counties to provide recognition of their historical and cultural importance. Specifically, **this bill:**

- 1) Includes findings and declarations related to the role Native Americans have played in the state and country's culture and success.
- 2) Requires Caltrans to work with the Native American Heritage Commission, the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names, the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, and California Indian tribes local to, or historically located along, Route 210, to identify appropriate locations for signs to recognize tribal lands along Route 210.
- 3) Requires Caltrans, through the erection of highway signs and appropriate markers, to provide recognition of the historical and cultural importance of the California Indian tribes local to, or historically located in, the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino.
- 4) Requires Caltrans to determine the cost of signs and other appropriate markers, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system, and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources sufficient to cover the cost, shall erect those signs and other appropriate markers at the appropriate locations on Route 210.
- 5) Established the intent of the legislature to designate Route 210 as the Southern California Native American Freeway, or a name appropriate and pertaining to the process outlined in this bill.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Existing law vests Caltrans with full possession and control of all state highways. (Streets and Highways Code (SHC) Section 90)
- 2) Existing law describes the authorized routes in the state highway system, including that for Route 210. (SHC Sections 250-635)
- 3) Existing law requires Caltrans to keep and repair all objects or markers adjacent to a state highway that have been erected to mark registered historical places. (SHC 101.12)

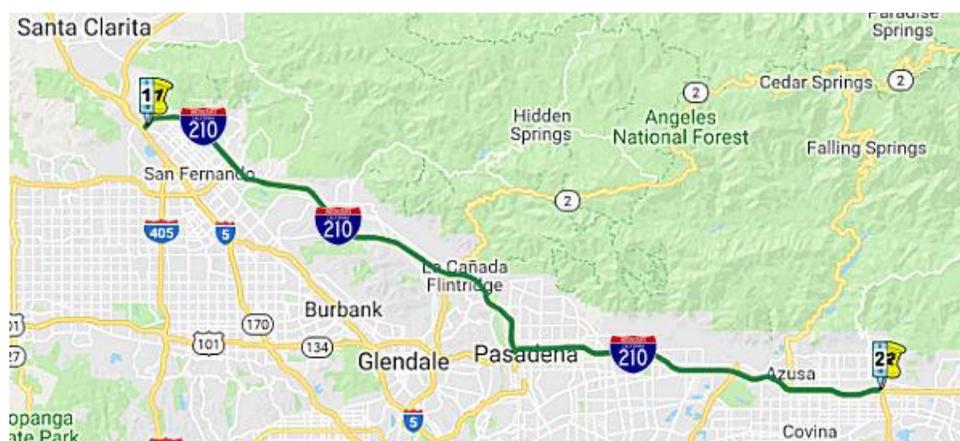
FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown

COMMENTS: California is home to more people of Native American/ Alaska Native heritage than any other state. There are currently 109 federally recognized Indian tribes in California and several non-federally recognized tribes petitioning for federal recognition through the Bureau of Indian Affairs-Office of Federal Recognition. Tribes in California currently have nearly 100 separate reservations or Rancherias. There are also a number of individual Indian trust allotments. Had the 18 original treaties with California Indian tribes been honored by the State and federal government, California Indian tribes would possess over 7.5 million acres of land. Today, California tribes collectively possess about 7% of their unratified treaty territory.

Los Angeles (L.A.) County is home to more than 140,000 Native American people. Three tribes in L.A. County are recognized by the State of California. More than 2,000 years before European settlers arrived, L.A. County was home to the Ventureño, Gabrieleño-Tongva and Fernandeno peoples. The footpaths of the Tongva through the Sepulveda Basin became the basis for the 405 Freeway. Yaanga, the Tongva people's largest village in the area, was in what is now downtown Los Angeles near Union Station.

The Gabrieleño inhabited the southern portion of what is today L.A. County, the northern portion of Orange County, and some western portion of both San Bernardino and Riverside counties. There were an estimated 5,000 to 10,000 Gabrieleño living in the region when the first Spanish settlers arrived in 1781 to establish Los Angeles. Beginning in the 1980s, Gabrieleño descendants began organizing for formal tribal recognition. In 1994, the California Assembly, by resolution, recognized the "Gabrielinos as the aboriginal tribe of the Los Angeles Basin."

Route 210 and Naming. There are two segments of Route 210. State statute establishes Route 210 from 1) Route 5 near Tunnel Station to Route 57 near San Dimas via the vicinity of San Fernando, and from 2) Route 57 near San Dimas to Route 10 in Redlands via the vicinity of Highland as shown in the two figures below.





Some of Route 210 is already named. The portion of the freeway from Route 5 to Route 10 is named the "Foothill Freeway". In addition, legislators have used resolutions and the memorial highway naming process to name portions of Route 210. These names include: "Jackie Robinson Memorial Highway" in Los Angeles County, "Pasadena Police Agent Richard Morris Memorial Highway" in the city of Pasadena, and "Martin A. Matich Highway" in the city of Redlands.

In September 2020, the California Natural Resources Agency, the California Department of State Parks, and Caltrans announced "Steps to Address Discriminatory Names, Inequities in State Parks and Transportation System Features." This announcement includes that, "Caltrans will carry out a detailed review of all named assets located on the state transportation system and develop a proposal identifying those to be renamed or rescinded."

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 Caltrans to improve the naming process to ensure greater equity and to better represent the diversity of California.

Land acknowledgement. Land acknowledgment is a traditional custom that dates back centuries in many Native nations and communities. Today, land acknowledgments are used by Native Peoples and non-Natives to recognize Indigenous Peoples who are the original stewards of the lands on which we now live. This is an act of conciliation that makes a statement recognizing the traditional land of the indigenous people who have called and still call the land home before and after the arrival of settlers. Usually, land acknowledgments take the form of written and/or verbal statements.

The acknowledgment of indigenous lands ultimately provides exposure and a learning opportunity for individuals who may have never heard the names of the tribes that have and continue to live and learn from the land they are standing on. It is also worth noting that acknowledging the land is indigenous/tribal protocol and the practice establishes a respectful routine and habit of supporting reconciliation.

According to the Gabrielino-Tongva Indian Tribe, a California Indian Tribe Known As San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, there are a variety of local historical landmarks in the Los Angeles basin that recognize traditions of the indigenous people who have lived in this region for thousands of years, including; San Gabriel Mission, Tongva Peak, Cahuenga Peak, Gabrielino Trail, Tongva Park, Hahamongna Watershed Park, Heritage Park, Rio Vista Park, Smith Park, Long Beach VA Hospital, San Dimas California City Hall, Gold Line Bridge, Tongva Memorial, and Soapstone Quarry - Airport in the Sky.

This bill acknowledges the tribal cultural affiliations along Route 210 including Cahuilla, Chumash, Gabrielino/Tongva, Fernandeno/Tataviam and Serrano. Additionally, the bill requires Caltrans to work with the Native American Heritage Commission, the California Advisory Committee on Geographic Names, the Counties of Los Angeles and San Bernardino, and California Indian tribes local to, or historically located along, Route 210, to identify appropriate locations for signs to recognize tribal lands along Route 210, including an appropriate name for Route 210 beyond the Southern California Native American Freeway.

On June 18, 2019, Governor Gavin Newsom issued Executive Order N-15-19, which acknowledges and apologizes on behalf of the State for the historical “violence, exploitation, dispossession and the attempted destruction of tribal communities” which dislocated California Native Americans from their ancestral land and sacred practices. The destructive impacts of this forceful separation persist today, and meaningful, reparative action from the State of California (State) can begin to address these wrongs in an effort to heal its relationship with California Native Americans. It is the policy of this administration to support California tribes’ co-management of and access to natural lands that are within a California tribe’s ancestral land and under the ownership or control of the State of California, and to work cooperatively with California tribes that are interested in acquiring natural lands in excess of State needs.

While increased awareness for native people is critical, it is advised the author continues to engage with the local tribes of the Los Angeles basin, the Governor’s Office of Tribal Affairs, and Caltrans, to create impact beyond highway naming.

According to the author, “Indigenous Peoples are not just part of the past, but part of the greater Los Angeles County community. Los Angeles County is home to the largest concentration of persons of any part American Indian descent in the United States. AB 776 seeks to rename Interstate 210, to be known as the Southern California Native American Freeway. The Department of Transportation will work with California Indian tribes local to the region or tribes historically located in the region to identify appropriate locations of signs to recognize tribal lands along Interstate 210. It needs to be clear that Indigenous Peoples are still here, and they have not left their ancestral lands. The State Legislature has taken a number of positive actions to acknowledge past transgressions against Indigenous Peoples and AB 776 is another step to increase cultural understanding, sensitivity and empathy for Tribes that have cultural ties to the Los Angeles and San Bernardino region.”

In support, the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleno/Tongva writes, “We are the tribe that was recognized by the State of California in 1994 and are eager to increase our visibility on our Ancestral Land. We work to ensure cultural preservation, education and awareness that we are here. We are encouraged by this step of recognition by Assemblyman Holden and view this as a first step in supporting our tribe and the First People of Los Angeles. For these reasons and many more the San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleno/Tongva are proud to support AB 776.”

Previous legislation. ACR 177 (Bloom) Chapter 175, Statutes of 2022, requests that the Department of Transportation remove the "The Christopher Columbus Transcontinental Highway" designation from the portion of Interstate 10 in the state, as well as any signage and markers memorializing that designation, and advise the Federal Highway Administration of the state's action.

ACR 197 (Gatto, Holden) Chapter 165, Statutes of 2016, designates the portion of Route 210 from Gould Avenue to Orange Grove Boulevard in the County of Los Angeles (~ LA R20.59 to LA R24.64) near where Jackie Robinson grew up is named the "Jackie Robinson Memorial Highway."

ACR 170 (Holden) Chapter 181, Statutes of 2014, designates the portion of Route 210 from Allen Avenue on the west to Rosemead Boulevard on the east in the City of Pasadena (~ LA R27.435 to LA R29.496) as the "Pasadena Police Agent Richard Morris Memorial Highway".

ACR 156 (Emmerson, Bogh) Chapter 144, Statutes of 2006, designates the interchange of Route 210 and Route 215, in the City of San Bernardino at SBD 21.84, to the existing interchange of Route 210 and Route 10, in the City of Redlands at SBD 33, as the "Martin A. Matich Highway".

AJR 96 (Martinez) Statutes of 1994, recognizes the Gabrielinos as the aboriginal tribe of the Los Angeles Basin and memorializes the President and Congress give similar recognition to the Gabrielinos.

SCR 29 (Leonard) Chapter 128, Statutes of 1991, establishes Route 210 from Route 5 to Route 10 in as the Foothill Freeway.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Claremont United Church of Christ
Presbytery of San Gabriel
San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians Gabrieleno/Tongva

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Julia Kingsley / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093