

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 15

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 76

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 15—Relative to the John Sanford Todd Memorial Highway.

[Filed with Secretary of State July 17, 2009.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 15, Furutani. John Sanford Todd Memorial Highway.

This measure would designate the portion of State Highway Route 605 between Carson Street and Del Amo Boulevard, in the County of Los Angeles, as the John Sanford Todd Memorial Highway. The measure would also request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost for appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs.

WHEREAS, The young community of Lakewood, that John Sanford Todd joined in 1949, had gone from practically no population to nearly 100,000 residents in 1953. This population growth raised a huge question of whether the unincorporated community should be absorbed into the City of Long Beach or whether the families of Lakewood should take on the risks of cityhood; and

WHEREAS, John Sanford Todd joined the battle to keep Lakewood independent when the City of Long Beach began a series of annexation elections in 1953. With other community members, John Sanford Todd mounted a spirited campaign to prevent “piecemeal annexation.” It was his strategy of appealing each annexation election as soon as it was announced that stalled the City of Long Beach’s plans, although Lakewood Village and a few other neighborhoods accepted annexation; and

WHEREAS, Annexation was stopped, but Lakewood’s future was still in doubt. John Sanford Todd took up the next challenge, working with other leaders to circulate incorporation petitions based on the radical idea that Lakewood had the resources to be a city; and

WHEREAS, The heart of the argument for cityhood was a plan, which was called “the Lakewood plan.” John Sanford Todd conceived the idea that unincorporated communities did not have to choose between annexation by a big city or building a costly civic infrastructure from scratch. Instead, he believed that city councils could turn to the county to deliver municipal services through a system of contracts; and

WHEREAS, Convinced that the plan would work, Lakewood voters made their community a city in 1954 and the first in the nation to supply all of its services by contract. Today, the contracting plan that John Sanford Todd created shapes the future of one-quarter of California cities; and

WHEREAS, The Lakewood plan's "father" became its chief interpreter when the first Lakewood City Council met on April 16, 1954. The new council members appointed John Sanford Todd as Lakewood's City Attorney. He held that office until 2004, a period of 50 years, and was one of the longest serving city attorneys in California history; and

WHEREAS, As the city's legal counsel over that period of 50 years, John Sanford Todd drafted hundreds of ordinances, policies, regulations, and resolutions. The quality of everyday life in Lakewood can be directly attributed to the body of law of which John Sanford Todd was the principal author; and

WHEREAS, As important as that work was, it was not John Sanford Todd's greatest achievement; and

WHEREAS, Almost as soon as Lakewood was formed, some cities sought to undermine the basis of the contract plan with the county. The new contract cities were threatened by a series of political and legal maneuvers that would have made the Lakewood plan impossible; and

WHEREAS, With John Sanford Todd's guidance, contract cities fought back. In 1957, they formed what would become the California Contract Cities Association. With John Sanford Todd as lead counsel, those cities took their cause to the Los Angeles County Grand Jury, the California Legislature, and the courts. The Lakewood plan was finally vindicated in a landmark ruling by the State Court of Appeals in 1977; and

WHEREAS, John Sanford Todd served in other ways, including as an officer in the contract cities association and in the statewide League of California Cities. He was, for a time, the City Attorney of Pico Rivera as well as Lakewood. And he was the first legal counsel of the California Joint Powers Insurance Authority, an agency that provides member cities with insurance protection; and

WHEREAS, "Preservation" might be one of the major themes of John Sanford Todd's career as city attorney, legal counsel, and defender of the Lakewood plan. "Innovation" was another major theme of his career. John Sanford Todd saw more clearly than others that new forms of local government were needed for the new cities of California; and

WHEREAS, John Sanford Todd died August 30, 2008, at the age of 89, and is survived by two sons and five grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Future Lakewood City Council members will miss John Sanford Todd's wise advice. They will remember his contributions with pride. Lakewood residents will honor him always as a true "Lakewood legend"; and

WHEREAS, There will always be only one John Sanford Todd, "the Legend of Lakewood," and Lakewood's first City Attorney; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature designates the portion of State Highway Route 605 between Carson Street and Del Amo Boulevard, in the County of Los Angeles, as the John Sanford Todd Memorial Highway; and be it further

Resolved, That the Department of Transportation is requested to determine the cost of appropriate signs, consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system, showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources sufficient to cover that cost, to erect those signs; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the Department of Transportation and to the author for appropriate distribution.