

Assembly Bill No. 157

CHAPTER 393

An act to add Section 30910.7 to the Streets and Highways Code, relating to the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, and declaring the urgency thereof, to take effect immediately.

[Approved by Governor October 1, 2015. Filed with
Secretary of State October 1, 2015.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 157, Levine. Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

Existing law specifies the powers and duties of the Department of Transportation, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, and the Bay Area Toll Authority with respect to the collection and expenditure of toll revenue from the 7 state-owned toll bridges within the geographic jurisdiction of the commission, including the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.

This bill, if the commission and the department develop a project to open the third lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to automobile traffic on the eastbound level and to bicycle traffic on the westbound level, would authorize the lead agency to complete the design work for the project simultaneously with the environmental review conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act.

This bill would declare that it is to take effect immediately as an urgency statute.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge opened on September 1, 1956. At the time of construction, the bridge was one of the longest bridges in the world and was constructed at a cost of \$62 million.

(b) The initial construction, with the help of additional funding provided by the state (Chapter 159 of the Statutes of 1955), provided for the construction of six 12-foot wide lanes. The six lanes were initially comprised of three lanes in both the eastbound and westbound directions.

(c) In 1977, the little-used third lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge was closed to allow for a pipeline to transport eight million gallons of water a day from the East Bay Municipal Utility District to drought stricken Marin County. In 1978, the pipeline was removed and the third lane was restriped as an emergency shoulder.

(d) In 1989, following the Loma Prieta earthquake and the closure of the San Francisco Bay Bridge from October 17 to November 18, inclusive, the

third lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge was opened in both the eastbound and westbound directions to help ease traffic flow across the bay.

(e) The possibility of opening the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to bicycle and pedestrian access has been debated for over three decades since the 1977 closure of the third lane. In 2001, plans for bicycle access were rejected by the Department of Transportation for safety reasons. Alternative plans to open the bridge to bicycle and pedestrian access that address safety are currently under development.

(f) The total estimated cost of reestablishing the third lane of traffic in the eastbound direction on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge, reconfiguring the bike path on the east side of the bridge, and constructing a bike path on the westbound level of the bridge is \$65 million.

(g) In the interest of improving traffic flow, maximizing existing resources, and reducing the environmental impacts resulting from the traffic backup on the eastbound bridge approach that impacts traffic on Highway 101, it is necessary that the third lane of the bridge be opened to traffic at the earliest possible date.

SEC. 2. Section 30910.7 is added to the Streets and Highways Code, to read:

30910.7. If the Metropolitan Transportation Commission and the department develop a project to open the third lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to automobile traffic on the eastbound level and to bicycle traffic on the westbound level, the lead agency may, to the extent feasible, complete the design work for the project simultaneously with the environmental review conducted pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (Division 13 (commencing with Section 21000) of the Public Resources Code).

SEC. 3. This act is an urgency statute necessary for the immediate preservation of the public peace, health, or safety within the meaning of Article IV of the Constitution and shall go into immediate effect. The facts constituting the necessity are:

In order to open the third lane of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to traffic at the earliest possible date, it is necessary for this act to take effect immediately.