

Introduced by Senator Burton

(Principal coauthors: Assembly Members Migden, Papan,
and Shelley)

February 10, 2000

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 65—Relative to the San Francisco Bar Pilots.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 65, as introduced, Burton. San Francisco Bar Pilots.

This measure would honor the former and current members of the San Francisco Bar Pilots for their important role, throughout California's history, in the enhancement of maritime commerce, protection of cargoes, and safeguarding the fragile environment of the bays and rivers on which they have served.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Bar Pilots, established
2 by Captain William Richardson, have continuously
3 assisted maritime trade and protected the navigable
4 waters of San Francisco Bay and adjoining waters since
5 1835; and

6 WHEREAS, In the California Legislature's very first
7 session at Pueblo de San Jose, which began on December
8 15, 1849, and ended on April 22, 1850, the Assembly and
9 Senate quickly recognized the importance of pilotage to
10 the state's commerce; and

11 WHEREAS, Chapter 1 of the 1849–50 legislative session
12 established the State Archives; and



1 WHEREAS, Chapter 2 of the 1849–50 legislative session
2 established the State Printer; and

3 WHEREAS, Chapter 3 of the 1849–50 legislative
4 session, authorized the Governor, with the advice and
5 consent of the Senate, to appoint pilots for the ports and
6 harbors of California. That bill passed on January 8, 1850,
7 and was signed by California’s first Governor, Peter H.
8 Burnett; and

9 WHEREAS, In that same legislative session, Chapter 18
10 was passed on February 25, 1850, and was signed by
11 Governor Burnett. It established the Board of Pilot
12 Commissioners for the Port of San Francisco; and

13 WHEREAS, The Board of Pilot Commissioners for the
14 Port of San Francisco, now known as the Board of Pilot
15 Commissioners for the Bays of San Francisco, San Pablo,
16 and Suisun, is the longest operating state board or
17 commission in California history; and

18 WHEREAS, The Legislature in 1853 at the State
19 Capitol in Benicia, concerned that maritime safety and
20 commerce was being endangered by competition among
21 unaffiliated pilots, enacted a bill that required all bar
22 pilots operating in San Francisco to work cooperatively
23 under the auspices of the preexisting San Francisco Bar
24 Pilots organization. That bill was signed by California’s
25 third Governor, John Bigler; and

26 WHEREAS, Many years later, as a result of Chapter
27 1653 of the Statutes of 1984, all inland and river pilots
28 working within the Bays of San Francisco, San Pablo, and
29 Suisun, and on their tributaries, came under the
30 jurisdiction of the Board of Pilot Commissioners and
31 affiliated with the San Francisco Bar Pilots; and

32 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Bar Pilots at all times,
33 in all weather conditions, have been continuously
34 stationed for 150 years near the “SF” buoy 12 miles west
35 of the Golden Gate; and

36 WHEREAS, All vessels of 300 gross tons or more
37 engaged in foreign trade are required to have a San
38 Francisco Bar Pilot on board to cross the enormous
39 horseshoe shaped sandbar seaward of San Francisco Bay,
40 to enter the Golden Gate, and to navigate the waters of



1 San Francisco, San Pablo, and Suisun Bays. The San
2 Francisco Bar Pilots are now responsible for the safe
3 passage of nearly 9,000 vessels each year that range from
4 100-foot tugs to 1000-foot supertankers, and that include
5 container and bulk cargo ships, military vessels, and
6 cruise ships; and

7 WHEREAS, The waters worked by the San Francisco
8 Bar Pilots are some of our nation's busiest. Commercial
9 and recreational fishing boats, commuter ferries, military
10 and Coast Guard vessels, pleasure craft, and commercial
11 ships and tankers all share the waters. Through this
12 veritable water-traffic jam, the pilots guide the biggest
13 ships with the most dangerous cargo; and

14 WHEREAS, These waters are affected by thick fog,
15 high winds, and winter storms and are characterized by
16 shifting currents and tides, by treacherous shoals,
17 sandbars, and rock formations, and by narrow channels
18 and rivers; and

19 WHEREAS, The San Francisco Bar Pilots serve seven
20 ports including Benicia, Oakland, Redwood City,
21 Richmond, Sacramento, San Francisco, and Stockton as
22 well as numerous anchorages and terminals outside of
23 port jurisdictions; and

24 WHEREAS, The waters protected by the San Francisco
25 Bar Pilots are the largest estuary on the west coast of
26 North and South America; they include 1,000 miles of
27 shoreline and more than 90 percent of California's coastal
28 marshland; and

29 WHEREAS, In recognition of the rare skills necessary
30 for a person to safely pilot in these unique waters, the
31 Board of Pilot Commissioners, in 1986, established a
32 comprehensive training program that all prospective
33 pilots must complete. To qualify for the program, which
34 is a full-time endeavor lasting up to three years, an
35 applicant must already be an accomplished vessel
36 captain. He or she must hold a United States Coast Guard
37 Master's License with radar endorsement, have two
38 years' command or piloting experience, and a federal
39 pilotage endorsement; and



1 WHEREAS, All active duty pilots must also participate
2 in a board-sponsored continuing education program; and

3 WHEREAS, Due to their training, skill, and dedication,
4 the members of the San Francisco Bar Pilots have
5 achieved a 99.99% record of vessel movements with no
6 pilot error; now, therefore, be it

7 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California,*
8 *meeting in the historic State Capitol in Benicia, the*
9 *Assembly thereof concurring,* That it is with great pride
10 that the Legislature of the State of California honors both
11 the former and current members of the San Francisco Bar
12 Pilots for their important role, throughout California's
13 history, in the enhancement of maritime commerce,
14 protection of cargoes, and safeguarding the fragile
15 environment of the bays and rivers on which they have
16 served; and be it further

17 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit
18 copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate
19 distribution.

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21 CORRECTIONS

22 **Text — Page 1.**

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