

**Assembly Concurrent Resolution**

**No. 15**

**Introduced by Assembly Member Furutani**

January 29, 2009

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

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 15, as introduced, 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.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, The young community of Lakewood, that John
- 2 Sanford Todd joined in 1949, had gone from practically no
- 3 population to nearly 100,000 residents in 1953. This population
- 4 growth raised a huge question of whether the unincorporated
- 5 community should be absorbed into the City of Long Beach or
- 6 whether the families of Lakewood should take on the risks of
- 7 cityhood; and
- 8 WHEREAS, John Sanford Todd joined the battle to keep
- 9 Lakewood independent when the City of Long Beach began a
- 10 series of annexation elections in 1953. With other community

1 members, John Sanford Todd mounted a spirited campaign to  
2 prevent “piecemeal annexation.” It was his strategy of appealing  
3 each annexation election as soon as it was announced that stalled  
4 the City of Long Beach’s plans, although Lakewood Village and  
5 a few other neighborhoods accepted annexation; and

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, The Lakewood plan’s “father” became its chief  
24 interpreter when the first Lakewood City Council met on April  
25 16, 1954. The new council members appointed John Sanford Todd  
26 as Lakewood’s City Attorney. He held that office until 2004, a  
27 period of 50 years, and was one of the longest serving city attorneys  
28 in California history; and

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

34 WHEREAS, As important as that work was, it was not Todd’s  
35 greatest achievement; and

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

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

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

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

20 WHEREAS, John Sandford Todd died August 30, 2008, at the  
21 age of 89, and is survived by two sons and five grandchildren.

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

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

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

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

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