

Introduced by Senator Lowenthal
(Coauthors: Senators Ashburn, Harman, Huff, Kehoe, and Oropeza)
(Coauthor: Assembly Member Bonnie Lowenthal)

May 24, 2010

Senate Joint Resolution No. 33—Relative to national freight policy.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SJR 33, as introduced, Lowenthal. National freight policy.

This measure would request that Congress adopt a national freight policy as a component of the next federal transportation bill and subsequently direct the United States Department of Transportation to implement its provisions.

Fiscal committee: no.

- 1 WHEREAS, The national supply chain, national economy, and
2 international standing of the United States benefits from and
3 depends on the airport, land port of entry, and seaport infrastructure
4 that has been developed to facilitate interstate and international
5 trade by the State of California, its local governments, and its
6 residents; and
7 WHEREAS, While there are many important benefits from
8 facilitating international trade and California recognizes the need
9 to continue to invest in its trade and freight infrastructure, the
10 appropriate development of that infrastructure is impeded due to
11 the lack of federal funding and a federally endorsed national freight
12 policy; and
13 WHEREAS, A lack of significant investment in interstate and
14 international trade infrastructure in California has significant costs,
15 most notably the additional impacts of traffic congestion on our

1 local roads, highways, and railways; the emissions from heavy-duty
2 equipment, trains, trucks, and ships on air quality and public health;
3 and the public financing burdens associated with building and
4 maintaining the transportation infrastructure necessary to grow
5 and facilitate interstate and international trade; and

6 WHEREAS, California’s multiple airports of international
7 significance facilitate interstate and international trade in the
8 national interest, and operate within an aviation system facilitated
9 by the Federal Aviation Administration, the Transportation Security
10 Administration, and numerous other federal agencies; and

11 WHEREAS, California’s significantly improved infrastructure
12 at the land ports of entry at the United States-Mexico border
13 facilitate interstate and international trade in the national interest
14 and, with little federal participation in the creation of additional
15 freight capacity beyond the immediate border region to mitigate
16 the impacts, this international trade occurs under the auspices of
17 the North American Free Trade Agreement and is regulated by
18 United States Customs and Border Protection and numerous other
19 federal agencies; and

20 WHEREAS, California’s 11 public seaports, whose numbers
21 include the first, second, and fifth busiest container ports in the
22 country, facilitate interstate and international trade in the national
23 interest, are locally financed entities that do not receive regular
24 federal assistance or benefit from a fair percentage of the customs
25 revenue (of which approximately \$8 billion is generated in
26 California) or from the federal Harbor Maintenance Tax, and
27 operate within a maritime commerce system facilitated by the
28 Federal Maritime Commission, United States Customs and Border
29 Protection, United States Coast Guard, and numerous other federal
30 agencies; and

31 WHEREAS, California taxpayers have recently committed \$3.1
32 billion of taxpayer funds to improve the international goods
33 movement infrastructure in California, invest in additional seaport
34 security measures, and reduce air pollution from international
35 goods movement in California; and

36 WHEREAS, The significant costs, both direct and indirect, of
37 facilitating interstate and international trade should not rest
38 primarily with the State of California, its local governments, or its
39 citizens; and

1 WHEREAS, The primary responsibility for facilitating interstate
2 and international trade and for mitigating the impacts of that trade
3 rests with the federal government; and

4 WHEREAS, The federal government does not have a
5 comprehensive national freight policy in place to facilitate the
6 measured and planned growth of interstate and international trade
7 amongst and between the states, our foreign neighbors, or from
8 our international airports and international seaports to domestic
9 points of destination, nor to address the significant direct and
10 indirect infrastructure, environmental, health, financial, and
11 congestion impacts resulting from interstate and international trade;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, In the previous round of federal transportation
14 reauthorization that ultimately produced the Safe Accountable
15 Flexible Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy For Users
16 (SAFETEA-LU), Congress directed the creation of and a report
17 from a revenue commission, whereby the commission analyzed
18 and recommended multiple changes to the federal methodologies
19 by which transportation projects are funded and financed by
20 Congress, and these recommendations included farsighted and
21 innovative national freight infrastructure funding strategies; and

22 WHEREAS, Congress has yet to authorize a new federal
23 transportation bill; and

24 WHEREAS, Interstate and international trade activity through
25 California's airports, land ports of entry, and seaports is crucial to
26 the overall health of the state, national, and international
27 economies; facilitates the creation of millions of jobs with higher
28 than average wages; and contributes billions of dollars in federal,
29 state, and local tax and fee revenues; and

30 WHEREAS, The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 created a
31 national effort to finance and build national transportation
32 infrastructure that is the National Highway System, an investment
33 that has had an enormous impact on the productivity of the
34 American economy; similarly, a national multimodal investment
35 in national goods movement infrastructure to move goods
36 efficiently would provide a comparable impact on the American
37 economy and its 21st century competitiveness; and

38 WHEREAS, The creation of a national freight policy would
39 provide a federal basis for investment in trade-facilitating
40 infrastructure development, public and private participation in

1 financing trade infrastructure, significant emissions reductions and
2 air quality benefits, and a platform for the equitable distribution
3 of federal funds such that California and its local transportation
4 partners would receive their fair share of those revenues; now,
5 therefore, be it

6 *Resolved by the Senate and the Assembly of the State of*
7 *California, jointly,* That the Legislature respectfully requests that
8 the Congress of the United States adopt a national freight policy
9 as a component of the next federal transportation bill and
10 subsequently direct the United States Department of Transportation
11 to implement its provisions; and be it further

12 *Resolved,* That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
13 this resolution to the President and Vice President of the United
14 States, the Speaker of the United States House of Representatives,
15 the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, and each Senator
16 and Representative representing California in the Congress of the
17 United States.