

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 23, 2023

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2023–24 REGULAR SESSION

**ASSEMBLY BILL**

**No. 1464**

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**Introduced by Assembly Member Connolly**

February 17, 2023

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An act to add Section 30910.8 to the Streets and Highways Code, relating to transportation.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 1464, as amended, Connolly. ~~Toll Bridges: Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.~~

Existing law establishes state-owned toll bridges within the geographic jurisdiction of the Metropolitan Transportation Commission, in the San Francisco Bay area, including the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge. Under existing law, the Bay Area Toll Authority is responsible for the administration of the toll revenues from the state-owned toll bridges in the San Francisco Bay area. Existing law requires the Department of Transportation to collect tolls, operate, maintain, and provide rehabilitation of the state-owned toll bridges in the San Francisco Bay area and to be responsible for the design and construction of improvements on those bridges in accordance with programming and scheduling requirements adopted by the Bay Area Toll Authority.

This bill would ~~state the intent of the Legislature to enact subsequent legislation to improve traffic flow on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge.~~ require the department and the authority, if they develop a project to open the 3rd lane on the westbound level of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to motor vehicle traffic, to consider operating the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge in a specified manner.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: ~~no~~-yes.  
State-mandated local program: no.

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

1     SECTION 1. *The Legislature finds and declares all of the*  
2 *following:*  
3     (a) *The Richmond-San Rafael Bridge opened on September 1,*  
4 *1956. At the time of construction, the bridge was one of the longest*  
5 *bridges in the world and was constructed at a cost of \$62,000,000.*  
6     (b) *The initial construction, with the help of additional funding*  
7 *provided by the state (Chapter 159 of the Statutes of 1955),*  
8 *provided for the construction of six 12-foot-wide lanes. The six*  
9 *lanes were initially composed of three lanes in both the eastbound*  
10 *and westbound directions.*  
11     (c) *In 1977, the then little-used third lane on the Richmond-San*  
12 *Rafael Bridge was closed to allow for a pipeline to transport*  
13 *8,000,000 gallons of water a day from the East Bay Municipal*  
14 *Utility District to drought-stricken Marin County. In 1978, the*  
15 *pipeline was removed and the third lane was restriped as an*  
16 *emergency shoulder.*  
17     (d) *In 1989, following the Loma Prieta earthquake and the*  
18 *closure of the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge from October*  
19 *17 to November 18, inclusive, the third lane on the Richmond-San*  
20 *Rafael Bridge was opened in both the eastbound and westbound*  
21 *directions to help ease traffic flow across the bay, and was closed*  
22 *after the San Francisco-Oakland Bay Bridge reopened.*  
23     (e) *In 2016, the Bay Area Toll Authority and the Metropolitan*  
24 *Transportation Commission (MTC) declared that the Marin County*  
25 *side of the bridge had “unacceptable levels of service,” not only*  
26 *on the freeway, but also on the local Marin streets in the Cities of*  
27 *Larkspur and San Rafael. As a result, they authorized a*  
28 *\$74,000,000 project to reopen the third lane of the lower deck.*  
29 *Completed two years later, the Department of Transportation and*  
30 *MTC reported that the new lane “has eliminated afternoon*  
31 *congestion on eastbound I-580 onto the bridge saving drivers*  
32 *approximately 15 minutes daily on their seven mile trip from Marin*  
33 *to Contra Costa County. This equates to annual savings of 700,000*  
34 *vehicle-hours of delay on weekdays and another 91,000 vehicle*

1 hours on weekends.” The project was put up for awards, and won  
2 “Project of the Year” in California.

3 (f) Unaddressed traffic on the East Bay approach of the  
4 Richmond-San Rafael Bridge has steadily worsened, even during  
5 the pandemic. Each workday, during the morning commute,  
6 approximately 18,000 Bay Area residents cross the Richmond-San  
7 Rafael Bridge. The vast majority of those commuters, 63 percent,  
8 are people of color. Sixty-nine percent of them do not have a  
9 college degree, and the majority of commuters, 60 percent, make  
10 less than the median income in the San Francisco Bay area.  
11 Virtually all of these drivers have no other reasonable means to  
12 get to work.

13 (g) As these 18,000 drivers approach the Richmond-San Rafael  
14 Bridge in the County of Contra Costa, they hit a very significant  
15 and growing traffic issue. During the peak hour, on average, they  
16 face an added 16 minutes of gridlocked, stop-and-go traffic. This  
17 traffic jam on the freeway also backs up local streets and roads  
18 in the City of Richmond, impacting many local families residing  
19 in traditionally disadvantaged communities.

20 (h) According to air monitors in the City of Richmond, this  
21 morning freeway backup is now the largest source of nonwildfire  
22 air pollution in the City of Richmond. This pollution is largely  
23 concentrated in disadvantaged communities.

24 (i) In the interest of social justice, environmental justice,  
25 improving traffic flow, maximizing existing resources, reducing  
26 greenhouse gases, and reducing the environmental impacts  
27 resulting from traffic backup on the westbound Richmond-San  
28 Rafael Bridge approach, the Department of Transportation and  
29 the Bay Area Toll Authority should consider reopening the third  
30 westbound lane on the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge to motor  
31 vehicle traffic in a manner that considers expanding multimodal  
32 transportation, preserving pathways for bicyclists, and reducing  
33 localized greenhouse gas emissions.

34 SEC. 2. Section 30910.8 is added to the Streets and Highways  
35 Code, to read:

36 30910.8. If the authority and the department develop a project  
37 to open the third lane on the westbound level of the Richmond-San  
38 Rafael Bridge to motor vehicle traffic, the authority and the  
39 department shall consider doing all of the following as part of the  
40 project:

1 (a) Restoring the third westbound lane on the Richmond-San  
2 Rafael Bridge to motor vehicle traffic during the weekday morning  
3 commute.

4 (b) Adding a movable “zipper” barrier to the eastbound level  
5 of the Richmond-San Rafael Bridge similar to the barrier on the  
6 westbound level so that a continuously operating bicycle and  
7 pedestrian lane and the San Francisco Bay Trail can be  
8 maintained.

9 (c) Operating the moveable “zipper” barriers on both levels of  
10 the Richmond-San Rafael bridge in such a manner so as to allow  
11 the most efficient flow of traffic in either direction while preserving  
12 an open bicycle and pedestrian lane and the San Francisco Bay  
13 Trail.

14 ~~SECTION 1. It is the intent of the Legislature to enact~~  
15 ~~subsequent legislation to improve traffic flow on the Richmond-San~~  
16 ~~Rafael Bridge.~~

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