



News Release

Harbor Commission Approves Bridge Project EIR Panel OKs \$1 billion proposal to replace Gerald Desmond span

August 10, 2010

The Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners on Monday, August 9, unanimously approved a plan to replace the aging Gerald Desmond Bridge with a new, nearly \$1 billion span that will accommodate future traffic needs and dramatically improve safety for vessels and vehicles alike.



The Port of Long Beach, in partnership with Caltrans, will oversee the project to design and build a higher, wider bridge parallel to and just north of the existing Gerald Desmond Bridge. Once the new bridge is completed and open, the old structure will be taken down. The project will generate an average of 4,000 jobs per year during the expected five-to-six years of construction.

"This is a high priority project both on a national and a local scale," said Harbor Commission President Nick Sramek. "It benefits both the environment and the economy, and we need to move forward expeditiously."

The Gerald Desmond Bridge is a vital route for cargo, carrying about 15 percent of the nation's goods. It is also a critical link for commuters, who make up about 75 percent of bridge traffic. The bridge serves as a connection for thousands of vehicles each day between Long Beach and San Pedro, and between Orange County and western Los Angeles County.

The new bridge will have three traffic lanes plus emergency lanes in both directions, making it safer and better able to accommodate cars and trucks on a major Southern California commuting route. The new bridge will be higher to allow for the newest generation of green cargo ships to pass underneath.

Along with the environmental certification, the Commission also approved additional funds for the Port Mitigation Grant Programs, which are designed to reduce the cumulative air quality impacts from major Port development projects. The Commission added \$2.4 million to the mitigation grant programs, which now total \$17.4 million.

A fact sheet, informational video, Q and A, and the complete environmental impact report are available through the Port's website at www.polb.com/bridge.

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