

Funding Partners



Officials Launch \$950 million Bridge Project Thousands of jobs, safer transportation on the way

November 22, 2010

Marking the start of a nearly \$1 billion project to replace the aging Gerald Desmond Bridge in the Port of Long Beach, elected officials, federal and state transportation leaders and port authorities gathered Monday to formally launch the project and recognize the successful efforts to obtain complete funding and approvals.



In addition to meeting the need for Port modernization and regional transportation improvement, the five-year construction project is expected to generate 4,000 jobs a year and more than \$2 billion in economic activity, according to the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation. The new span will be higher to accommodate the newest, most efficient cargo ships and wider to handle the cars and trucks that travel the bridge each day.

"It's a proud day for the City of Long Beach, the County and the State," said Long Beach Mayor Bob Foster. "We acted — in time — to replace this aging bridge, and in so doing, we will build a landmark structure that will create jobs now and guarantee a stronger Port and smoother transportation network for the future."

"As resources become increasingly scarce, addressing our current and future needs will require new forms of partnerships among government agencies and our private sector partners," said California Business, Transportation and Housing Agency Secretary Dale Bonner.

"By working together, the agencies represented here today have devised a plan to create jobs sooner and accelerate the many public benefits of having a new bridge in place and well-maintained. Together, we will find innovative ways to continue investing in infrastructure, improving our environment, and increasing the operational efficiencies and overall competitiveness of the San Pedro Bay ports," Bonner said.

The bridge replacement is a joint project by the California Department of Transportation and the Port of Long Beach, with funding also from the U.S. Department of Transportation and the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority.

"The new Gerald Desmond Bridge will reduce congestion, enhance safety and improve traffic flow," said Caltrans Director Cindy McKim. "By undertaking bold projects like this one, we're improving mobility and encouraging commerce across California."

The Port and Caltrans are seeking firms that are qualified to take on the job to both design and build the new bridge. Design and preliminary construction could begin by mid-2011 and construction of the main bridge supports could start in early 2012.

"The new bridge will be designed to handle the traffic and cargo needs of the region -- not just now, but well into the future," said Nick Sramek, President of the Long Beach Board of Harbor Commissioners. "It's time to get started!"

Of the \$950 million needed for the bridge, \$500 million will come from state highway transportation funds. Federal sources are expected to contribute about \$300 million. The Port of Long Beach has pledged \$114 million and Los Angeles County Metro is providing \$28 million.

The 42-year-old Gerald Desmond Bridge is a vital route for trucked cargo, carrying about 15 percent of the nation's containerized goods. It is also a critical link for commuters, who make up about 75 percent of bridge traffic. Thousands of vehicles use it to travel each day between Long Beach and San Pedro, and between Orange County and western Los Angeles County.

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

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