

Date of Hearing: June 26, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

SB 606 (Alvarado-Gil) – As Amended April 10, 2023

SENATE VOTE: 40-0

SUBJECT: State highways: State Route 203: reduction

SUMMARY: Authorizes the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to relinquish to the Town of Mammoth Lakes all or a portion of Route 203 within its jurisdiction.

EXISTING LAW:

- 1) Defines a “state highway” as any roadway that is acquired, laid out, constructed, improved, or maintained as a state highway pursuant to constitutional or legislative authorization. (Streets and Highways Code (SHC) Section 24)
- 2) Defines Route 304 as from the Mono county line near Minaret Summit to Route 395. (SHC Section 503)
- 3) Specifies that it is the intent of the Legislature that the prescribed routes of the state highway system connect communities and regions of the state and that they serve the state’s economy by connecting centers of commerce, industry, agriculture, mineral wealth and recreation. (SHC Section 300)
- 4) Allows the relinquishment of portions of state highways to local government control through a statutory process requiring the CTC to make findings that it is in the best interest of the state to include or delete a specified portion of roadway from the system. (SHC Section 73)

FISCAL EFFECT: According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, unknown one-time Department of Transportation (Caltrans) costs ranging from minor to potentially up to the low millions of dollars prior to the relinquishment of the designated segment of SR 203 to the town of Mammoth Lakes (State Highway Account). These costs would be offset in future years due to avoided maintenance costs on the relinquished segment.

COMMENTS: Relinquishment is defined as the statutory conveyance of all rights, title, interests, liability, and maintenance responsibilities of a state highway, or portion thereof, to another government entity, according to the Caltrans 2018 Project Development Procedures Manual. California Streets and Highways Code, Section 73 authorizes the CTC to relinquish transportation facilities to cities and counties. The relinquished facilities become city streets or county roads. Section 73 identifies four types of relinquishments: legislative enactment, superseded by relocation, collateral facility, or a non-motorized transportation facility.

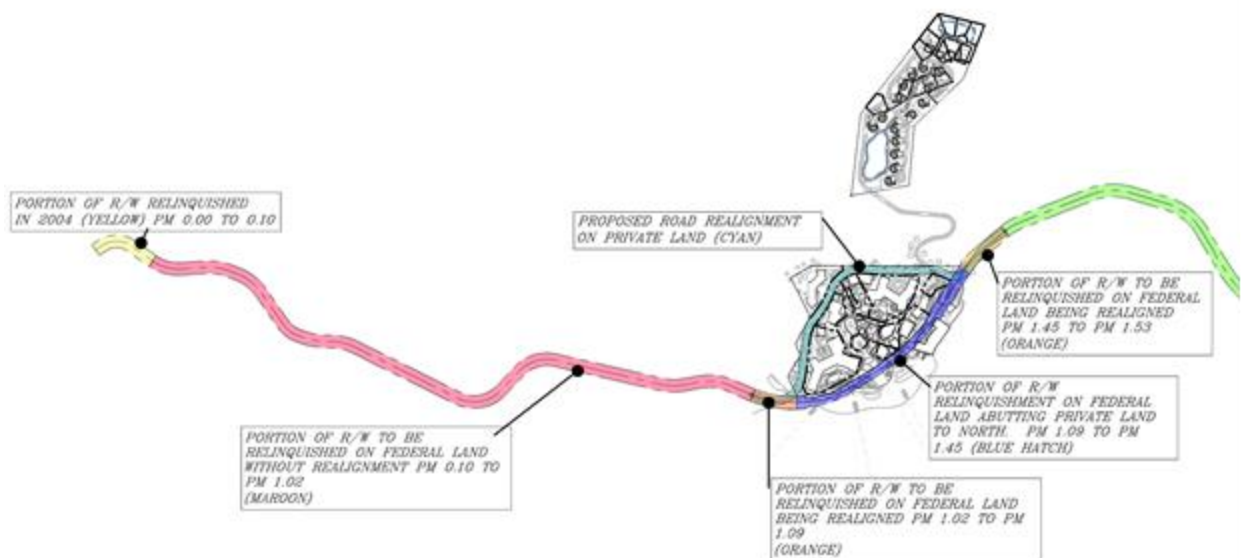
Each session, bills authorizing the relinquishment of segments of state highways to local jurisdictions are passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor. Relinquishment transactions are generally preceded by a negotiation of terms and conditions between the local jurisdiction and Caltrans. Once an agreement has been established, the Legislature can delete the portion of a highway from the Streets and Highways Code or authorize CTC to relinquish the

segment. The CTC then approves the relinquishment and verifies its approval via resolution. The relinquishment takes effect only after CTC approval and a certified copy of the relinquishment resolution is recorded in the county office of the recorder.

This bill is consistent with Caltrans' policy of encouraging the relinquishment of state highways that do not serve regional or statewide transportation needs. Recipient agencies often seek relinquishment of state highways so that they can have greater control over the facility, which often serves as a local street.

Route 203. Route 203 stretches west to east between Minaret Summit and U.S. Route 395 in Mono County. The Route passes through the town of Mammoth Lakes, connecting it to the U.S. route and rural communities to the west. Minaret Summit receives significant snowfall in the winter and the highway is usually closed during the winter between the Summit and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

A Mammoth undertaking. This bill is primarily supported by the town of Mammoth Lakes and the Mammoth Mountain Ski Area, a 20-acre recreational development. The Ski Area is undergoing a redevelopment project. As part of this project, the Area plans to build a new road that will be on the southern side of the lodge that will give visitors access to both sides of the lodge (see proposed plan below). This plan also includes building a new transit hub at the base of the lodge to make it more accessible to public transit and improve traffic circulation in the community. In order to do this, they need to make an addition to and diversion of the existing route, requiring relinquishment.



According to the author, “SB 606 will support economic development, improve traffic circulation, and preserve public access to natural resources in Mono County by relinquishing a portion of State Route 203 to the Town of Mammoth Lakes.”

In support, Mountain Mammoth Ski Area writes, “Subject to further study, relinquishment (most likely to the Town of Mammoth Lakes) would enable road realignment to the northern portion of the project in study, improving access, optimizing vehicle flow, avoiding congestion, and improving pedestrian safety.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

Mammoth Main Lodge Redevelopment
Town of Mammoth Lakes

Opposition

None on file

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