

Date of Hearing: August 16, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS

Chris Holden, Chair

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

Policy Committee: Transportation

Vote: 15 - 0

Urgency: No

State Mandated Local Program: No

Reimbursable: No

SUMMARY:

This bill authorizes the California Transportation Commission (CTC) to relinquish to the Town of Mammoth Lakes all or a portion of Route 203 within its jurisdiction, upon terms and conditions the commission finds to be in the best interests of the state, if the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) and the Town of Mammoth Lakes enter into an agreement providing for that relinquishment.

FISCAL EFFECT:

Potential one-time costs to Caltrans, ranging from minor to up to several million dollars, for negotiating the relinquishment of the designated segments of SR 203 to the Town of Mammoth Lakes (State Highway Account). These costs would be offset in future years by avoided maintenance on the relinquished segment.

COMMENTS:

Legislation is required before any segment of state highway can be relinquished to another governmental entity. Relinquishment provides the recipient agency with greater control over a local transportation project and relieves Caltrans of any further responsibility to improve, maintain or repair infrastructure related to the relinquished segment of state highway. Statute allows CTC to relinquish a state highway only after Caltrans has placed the highway in a state of good repair. The relinquishment takes effect only after CTC approval and a certified copy of the relinquishment resolution is recorded in the applicable county's office of the recorder.

When a city needs to make improvements to roadways under Caltrans control, there is a long permitting process. Additionally, the state is in control of traffic operations. Changes that seem appropriate at the community level do not always get Caltrans approval.

Route 203 stretches west to east between Minaret Summit and U.S Route 395 in Mono County. Route 203 passes through the Town of Mammoth Lakes, connecting the town 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.

The author asserts, "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."

Mountain Mammoth Ski Area writes in support of this bill, “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.”

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