

CONCURRENCE IN SENATE AMENDMENTS

AB 2372 (Hoover)

As Amended June 4, 2026

Majority vote

SUMMARY

Provides that an authorized emergency vehicle may be exempt from paying a toll on a vehicular crossing, toll highway, or high-occupancy toll if the California Highway Patrol (CHP) authorizes the vehicle as an emergency vehicle and clarifies that, in lieu of CHP authorization, upon the request of a private or public local emergency service provider, the owner or operator of a toll facility shall, in good faith, enter into an agreement to establish mutually agreed-upon terms, including being exempt from the toll payment.

Senate Amendments

Delete a provision clarifying that an agreement between an authorized emergency vehicle and a toll facility is in lieu of other compliance pathways provided in existing law, and reverts to existing law.

COMMENTS

As described below, there are two pathways under existing law for a private ambulance company to be eligible for a toll exemption, but these pathways are fraught with legal or compliance obstacles.

Pathway #1. AB 254 (Jeffries, Chapter 425, Statutes of 2009) exempted "authorized emergency vehicles" (e.g., private or public ambulance, police, fire, federal or tribal government), licensed by the CHP, from all toll facilities (toll road, high occupancy toll or HOT lane, toll bridge, toll highway, or vehicular crossing where a toll or charge is required) while responding to or returning from an urgent or emergency call, engaged in an urgent or emergency response, or engaging in a fire-related emergency assignment. The bill's premise was that an exemption from toll facilities would expedite an emergency vehicle's response or arrival time. Under the law, an emergency vehicle must also have an exempt license plate (e.g., exempt from registration fees) and be properly marked as an emergency vehicle, including warning lights and exterior identification (e.g., "ambulance").

However, under current state law only public entities are eligible for an exempt license plate. Therefore, private ambulances are not eligible for an exemption under this pathway and must seek an exemption under pathway #2 as described below. This has created confusion and as a result some toll agencies have denied exemption requests or have refused to enter into agreements with private ambulance companies without exempt plates. This bill seeks to resolve this obstacle by clarifying that instead of an exempt plate a private ambulance can also seek authorized emergency vehicle status from the CHP, as is routinely done by private ambulances today.

Toll exemption via agreement? Not so fast. AB 254 also authorized a local emergency service provider (a term which was not defined) to enter into an agreement, under mutually agreeable terms, with a toll operator to use a toll facility and be exempt from tolls. It is unclear if the Legislature intended this option to be mutually exclusive—the legislative history reflects reasonable interpretations either way.

AB 902 (Rodriguez), Chapter 124, Statutes of 2023, sponsored by the California Ambulance Association, added the words "public or private" preceding "local emergency service provider, to ensure a private ambulance operator could also enter into an agreement with a toll operator. However, very few agreements exist today because, according to the author and as mentioned above, a private ambulance cannot legally secure an exempt license plate. Some toll operators (e.g., Bay Area Toll Authority) have cited this requirement or have interpreted "mutually agreeable terms" as reasons not to negotiate an agreement with private ambulances. This committee is only aware of one executed agreement between the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority and private ambulances.

Adding to this morass, the California Toll Operators Committee, a statewide oversight and standards committee for toll operators, published a one-page document last year entitled "Private Ambulance Toll Exemption Process", which summarizes the steps for a private ambulance to enter into an agreement with toll operators. While recognizing that each toll operator may have "its own process for managing toll transactions for emergency vehicles", it implies that there are no legal obstacles to negotiating agreements.

According to the Author

According to the author. "The use of toll roads is a crucial component of emergency response operations as it allows first responders to reach critical situations more efficiently, reducing travel time, and improving patient outcomes. While current law exempts public emergency vehicles from paying toll fees when responding to and returning from emergency calls, this exemption does not extend to private ambulance providers. As a result, private ambulance companies face significant financial burdens due to toll costs, despite performing the same life-saving services as public ambulance providers. AB 2372 will bring much-needed financial equity to an industry already facing significant economic challenges by ensuring that private ambulance providers qualify for the same toll exemptions."

Arguments in Support

A number of private ambulance companies write in support. "The private ambulance industry plays a significant role in California's pre-hospital care system. Roughly 74% of ambulances in California are operated by private providers. Recently, the private ambulance industry has been hurting from growing financial burdens, including a Medi-Cal reimbursement rate that has not been increased in over two decades, as well as ever-increasing costs related to equipment, fuel, and operations. This bill would help alleviate these burdens by granting private ambulances the same toll exemption privileges as public ambulances."

Arguments in Opposition

None on file.

FISCAL COMMENTS

According to the Assembly Appropriations Committee, minor state costs, if any.

VOTES:

ASM TRANSPORTATION: 16-0-0

YES: Wilson, Davies, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Carrillo, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Jackson, Lackey, Macedo, Papan, Ransom, Rogers, Sharp-Collins, Ward

ASM APPROPRIATIONS: 14-0-1

YES: Wicks, Hoover, Aguiar-Curry, Caloza, Dixon, Fong, Mark González, Krell, Pacheco, Pellerin, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Ta, Tangipa

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula

ASSEMBLY FLOOR: 77-0-3

YES: Addis, Aguiar-Curry, Ahrens, Alanis, Alvarez, Ávila Farías, Bains, Bauer-Kahan, Bennett, Berman, Boerner, Bonta, Bryan, Calderon, Caloza, Carrillo, Castillo, Chen, Connolly, Davies, DeMaio, Dixon, Elhawary, Ellis, Fong, Gabriel, Gallagher, Garcia, Gipson, Jeff Gonzalez, Mark González, Hadwick, Haney, Harabedian, Hart, Hoover, Irwin, Jackson, Johnson, Kalra, Krell, Lackey, Lee, Lowenthal, Macedo, McKinnor, Muratsuchi, Nguyen, Ortega, Pacheco, Papan, Patel, Patterson, Pellerin, Petrie-Norris, Quirk-Silva, Ramos, Ransom, Michelle Rodriguez, Rogers, Blanca Rubio, Sanchez, Schiavo, Schultz, Sharp-Collins, Solache, Soria, Stefani, Ta, Tangipa, Valencia, Wallis, Ward, Wicks, Wilson, Zbur, Rivas

ABS, ABST OR NV: Arambula, Flora, Celeste Rodriguez

SENATE FLOOR: 39-0-1

YES: Allen, Archuleta, Arreguín, Ashby, Becker, Blakespear, Cabaldon, Caballero, Cervantes, Choi, Cortese, Dahle, Durazo, Gonzalez, Grayson, Grove, Hurtado, Jones, Laird, Limón, McGuire, McNerney, Menjivar, Niello, Ochoa Bogh, Padilla, Pérez, Reyes, Richardson, Rubio, Seyarto, Smallwood-Cuevas, Stern, Strickland, Umberg, Valladares, Wahab, Weber Pierson, Wiener

ABS, ABST OR NV: Alvarado-Gil

UPDATED

VERSION: June 4, 2026

CONSULTANT: Dan Chia / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093

FN: 0003448