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Contact: Paul Payne

(707) 576-2093

Sen. Dodd Introduces Highway 37 Improvement Bill

SEARS POINT – Sen. Bill Dodd, D-Napa, introduced legislation today to reduce traffic congestion along Highway 37 and protect the vital North Bay route from sea level rise driven by climate change.

“The time is now to improve this essential artery that connects us to jobs and supports our economy,” Sen. Dodd said. “If we don’t act, increased traffic and sea level rise will make an already bad situation simply unpassable. Without a dedicated revenue source, the problem won’t be fixed in many of our lifetimes. I introduced this bill to increase capacity for today’s commuters and make the route sustainable for future generations.”

Highway 37 runs along the northern edge of San Pablo Bay, serving as a critical connection for Sonoma, Solano, Napa and Marin counties. An estimated 40,000 cars and trucks cross it each day. That number is expected to increase nearly 50 percent, to 58,000 vehicles, over the 20 years. At the same time, a recent UC Davis study found that sea level rise will make the highway impossible to use by the end of the century, with serious periods of flooding expected annually in the coming decades.

The bill will create a tolling authority to raise capital for necessary improvements. The funding would help leverage state and federal funding sources to complete the needed overhaul. Details including administration, matching funds and the design of a new highway will be decided with future public input. Possibilities include an elevated causeway between Sears Point and Vallejo.

“We must continue to be proactive and find solutions to address the challenges that threaten Highway 37, a major transportation link for our community,” Sonoma County Supervisor David Rabbitt said. “I applaud Sen. Dodd for introducing this bill that will support a regional solution for this vital infrastructure and regional connector.”

The proposal is supported by stakeholders in Sonoma, Solano, Napa and Marin counties.

“The shores of the northern San Pablo Bay are the last large expanse of wetlands left in the Bay Area,” said Sonoma Land Trust Executive Director Eamon O’Byrne. “Protecting and restoring these wetlands offers a crucial and urgent opportunity to safeguard critical wildlife habitat and buffer the impacts of sea level rise on our vital infrastructure. Sonoma Land Trust looks forward to continuing the collaboration around the redesign of Highway 37 and applauds Senator Dodd for his leadership.”

“Highway 37 is the lifeline of the North Bay for commuters and the movement of goods,” said Cynthia Murray, president and CEO of North Bay Leadership Council. “We applaud Sen. Dodd’s introduction of a bill to allow tolling so that much-needed improvements can be made. The ability to raise funding is key to the economic health and public safety of the North Bay.”

The bill was announced today during a 10 a.m. press conference at highways 37 and 121. View the press conference on Sen. Dodd’s Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/SenBillDodd/>

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Senator Bill Dodd represents the 3rd Senate District, which includes all or portions of Napa, Yolo, Sonoma, Solano, Sacramento and Contra Costa counties. More information on Senator Bill Dodd can be found at www.senate.ca.gov/dodd.

Paul Payne

Press Secretary

Senator Bill Dodd

District 3 | Representing: Solano, Sonoma, Napa, Yolo, Contra Costa, and Sacramento Counties

Office: (707) 576-2093

Mobile: (707) 483-4874

paul.payne@sen.ca.gov

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