

Daily Breeze

Support grows for shorter, but full, Vincent Thomas Bridge closure in San Pedro

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Both the Port of Los Angeles and LA Councilmember Tim McOsker strongly pushed for the shortest possible time frame — a single-stage construction schedule — to replace the road bed on the Vincent Thomas Bridge in letters sent to Caltrans on Monday, July 15.

Anticipating what he’s called “Harborgeddon,” McOsker laid out several requests in a six-page letter to Caltrans as plans begin to finalize for a lengthy closure of the Vincent Thomas Bridge launching in fall 2025.

McOsker, in his letter to Senior Environmental Planner Jason Roach, said “every staging option analyzed in the (construction plan) is terrible” — with major impacts and downsides present in all of the choices.

Caltrans has proposed [four options for construction](#).

“Having to choose between poor outcomes,” McOsker wrote, “I fully support the ‘Single-Stage Construction’ schedule and want to see Caltrans rip off the Band-Aid and complete the project as soon as possible. The quicker the nightmare can end for these communities, the better it will be for everyone.”

The massive project is guaranteed to create traffic disruptions throughout the immediate Harbor Area, and will also impact the Port of Los Angeles.

“I want to be clear,” McOsker wrote. “This Harborgeddon will be painful for the nearby residents and workers of the San Pedro Bay Port Complex.”

McOsker’s “Harborgeddon” moniker comes from the 2011 traffic jams experienced when a bridge reconstruction project closed a portion of the 405 Freeway on two weekends. It became known locally as “Carmageddon.”

The California Department of Transportation has determined that the 1963 San Pedro span across Los Angeles Harbor to Terminal Island needs a new roadbed in order to keep it functioning. But the construction process could take anywhere from a little more than a year — with a complete bridge closure — to as many as four years using alternative lane and time schedule closures that would leave the bridge partially open.

“Any delay in the completion of the project will certainly cause additional and unnecessary economic and potential security risks,” POLA Executive Director Gene Seroka said in his letter, adding that the ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach handle about 35% of all containers moving through ports nationwide.

The bridge, that letter said, “is crucial for not only the movement of freight serving the region (and) state, but also non-port regional traffic.”

“As such,” Seroka added, “we recommend Caltrans consider all options to minimize the duration such as, but not limited to: construction methods, construction hours such as (added shifts); and contract incentives (and) disincentives” for damages or delays.

Seroka also raised issues surrounding needed terminal and rail operator coordination to minimize train crossing conflicts with longshore labor dispatch times at the ILWU 13 hall.

He called for plans to address the possible need for pavement widening, signal modifications and re-striping, new signage and the use of cameras.

The port letter also said Terminal Island has no food service establishments.

“We recommend considering financial subsidies to local restaurateurs or food truck providers to enable them to provide meal-hour service to workers,” the letter said. “Doing so will encourage workers to remain at the terminals for their full shift, rather than traveling on congested and circuitous detour routes back home or to food establishments off Terminal Island for their lunch breaks.”

Although the Caltrans study identified a duration of 16 months for the single-stage option, McOsker is calling on the agency to speed that up by investing in more work crews and hours, increased schedules, and “exceptional project management” to complete the work in less time.

The pressure is increased, McOsker said, by the upcoming impacts of the 2026 FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Olympic Games, which will include several events scheduled in neighboring Long Beach.

Turning to so-called traffic management plans, McOsker called on the state agency to add measures requiring establishing and funding a task force within the affected area.

“Even without this Harboreddon, Wilmington suffers an undue burden of truck traffic and other goods movement-related issues from the San Pedro Bay Port Complex operations,” the letter said. “You can see this impact on its streets on any given day.”

The detour routes, McOsker wrote, include West Harry Bridges Boulevard, Alameda Street, Anaheim Street, Pacific Coast Highway, Henry Ford Avenue and Terminal Island Freeway.

He added these specific recommendations:

- “To avoid pushing all detour traffic through Wilmington, Caltrans must focus on rerouting traffic heading to the east and west sides of San Pedro Bay before the southbound traffic gets to Pacific Coast Highway.”
- Detour streets should be repaired and resurfaced before the project begins.
- Other planned construction on impacted streets need to be pushed toward early completion so they do not further complicate the traffic situation in Wilmington.

McOsker also stressed the need for a multipronged, early and ongoing rollout of public information messages that would include freeway signage, camera views on construction conditions, estimated travel times via detours, emails, newsletters, and social media alerts.

Other suggestions included crossing guards near schools, California Highway Patrol enforcement and emergency response preparation.