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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Caltrans Moves To Hold Bay Bridge Contractors Accountable

Seeks Final Approval For Long-Term Testing and Maintenance Plan

SACRAMENTO –Caltrans officials will seek approval from the Toll Bridge Program Oversight Committee (TBPOC) to conclude its contract with American Bridge / Fluor, the joint venture that built many parts of the Bay Bridge, and hold the contractor accountable for project delays and faulty work. Before Caltrans can conclude its contract with American Bridge / Fluor and begin final negotiations over damages and penalties, the TBPOC, the project's governing body created by the Legislature, must approve the initiation of this process.

Last fall, Caltrans inspectors found that the contractor had not properly sealed more than 400 high-strength steel rods imbedded in the tower's foundation, failing to protect them against the elements. The threads of one rod stripped through its bolt and failed, prompting a thorough investigation of all the rods. Two of these rods were removed for testing, and the remaining rods underwent in-place earthquake-force tests. Testing concluded that the bolts could withstand a severe catastrophic earthquake.

Caltrans engineers will also seek TBPOC's approval of the recommendations put forth by an external panel of seismic experts to fix or mitigate the contractor's construction errors that potentially increased the risk of corrosion for these rods. The panel includes experts from the Federal Highway Administration, preeminent institutions of higher learning and engineering research, and members of the academy of sciences and engineering.

The TBPOC requested that Caltrans convene this panel of globally-respected experts to assist in determining the best way to protect the rods going forward, ensure that they have no material deficiencies, and that they and the bridge will perform as designed. The expert panel analyzed the anchor rods and their exposure to water due to poor grouting. The experts are submitting a list of potential tests they deem of varying importance for protecting the rods and foundation.

The TBPOC may decide to order all, some, or none of the panel's recommended tests.

“The Oversight Committee must balance the need for adequate testing to verify structural reliability against the risk of running unnecessary testing or devising a long-term maintenance program that is more expensive than necessary. Our goal is to devise a testing and maintenance plan that is adequate and simple,” said Chief Toll Bridge Engineer Brian Maroney.





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Engineering analysis conducted last fall, indicates that the rods are not critical to the bridge's performance and are a redundant system. Even if none of the rods were present, the bridge is expected to perform its lifeline function, weathering ground motions that only occur once every 1,500 years.

Please find the reports presented at the TBPOC meeting and additional information at www.baybridgeinfo.org. Today's meeting is scheduled to take place at the Department of Transportation, 1120 N St., in Sacramento. It can be heard via telephone at **(800) 803-2146**; access code **2474385**.

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