

RÉSUMÉ DIGEST

ACT 217 (HB 687)

2025 Regular Session

Wright

New law authorizes the board of commissioners of the Port of New Orleans (the board) to pursue a public-private partnership to fund the design, construction, and operation of the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor roadway, intended to serve as a direct commercial traffic route for the La. International Terminal, an alternative local route, and an emergency evacuation route to enhance public safety.

New law authorizes the development of a transportation facility that may include bridges, elevated roadways, and limited-access features. Additionally, specifies that the project will encompass necessary components such as roadways, drainage systems, soil erosion control, signage, right-of-way acquisition, and utility relocations to ensure the facility's successful completion and operation.

New law requires the project to comply with all relevant state and federal laws, including the minimum safety guidelines outlined in existing law.

New law authorizes the board to enter into agreements with public and private entities for the study, design, construction, operation, maintenance, and financing of the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor roadway project. Additionally, specifies that the board is empowered to acquire necessary property for the project through donation, purchase, exchange, lease, or expropriation in accordance with expropriation laws. Further, authorizes the board to accept appropriations, donations, grants, contributions, or allocations from federal or state sources, public utilities, private entities, or individuals and enter into agreements as needed to facilitate such acceptance.

New law authorizes the board to solicit proposals for a public-private partnership to design, construct, finance, operate, and maintain the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor roadway project. Further, requires that final concession agreements with the public-private partnership be approved by the Joint Committee on Transportation, Hwys. and Public Works.

New law requires the board to comply with the provisions of existing law and specifies it is not required to seek approval from the La. Transportation Authority. However, new law does require the final concession agreement with the public-private partner be appointed by the Joint Committee on Transportation, Hwys. and Public Works. Additionally, specifies that agreements made require a bond with sufficient surety and must adhere to the bond requirements set by the Dept. of Transportation and Development (DOTD).

New law requires the approval of the DOTD before including any elements in the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor roadway project that impact the state hwy. system. Additionally authorizes the board and the DOTD to enter into agreements for various aspects of the project, including development, acquisition, construction, operation, maintenance, or improvements. Further, specifies that the board may request the use of DOTD staff and funds for conducting surveys, preparing plans, and other necessary studies and allows the board to transfer the facility to the DOTD for inclusion in the state hwy. system under mutually agreed terms.

New law specifies that following a feasibility study by the Regional Planning Commission the board is authorized to design and regulate the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor roadway. Further, requires the board to consult with St. Bernard Parish and the DOTD on the final design and potential impacts on local and state roadways, drainage, flood protection, and other infrastructure.

New law authorizes user fees for the St. Bernard Transportation Corridor roadway, as provided in existing law and ensures free passage for individuals legally entitled to it over toll roads and bridges in La. Further, specifies that the board is granted the same powers as the DOTD regarding toll collection, administration, enforcement, and related activities. Additionally, specifies that the roadway and its property are exempt from taxation, even if a public-private partnership is involved.

New law clarifies that nothing in new law limits or restricts the powers of the board. Additionally, specifies it is considered supplemental, granting additional powers beyond those provided by any other general or special law.

Effective August 1, 2025.

(Adds R.S. 34:51-57)