


David Whitaker, Esq.
Director
Irvin Corley, Jr.
Executive Policy Manager
Marcell R. Todd, Jr.
Senior City Planner
Janese Chapman
Deputy Director

John Alexander
LaKisha Barclift, Esq.
Nur Barre
M. Rory Bolger, Ph.D., FAICP
Elizabeth Cabot, Esq.
Tasha Cowan
George Etheridge

City of Detroit
CITY COUNCIL
LEGISLATIVE POLICY DIVISION
208 Coleman A. Young Municipal Center
Detroit, Michigan 48226
Phone: (313) 224-4946 Fax: (313) 224-4336

Christopher Gulock, AICP
Derrick Headd
Marcel Hurt, Esq.
Kimani Jeffrey
Anne Marie Langan
Jamie Murphy
Kim Newby
Analine Powers, Ph.D.
Jennifer Reinhardt
Rebecca Savage
Sabrina Shockley
Thomas Stephens, Esq.
David Teeter
Theresa Thomas
Kathryn L. Underwood, MUP
Ashley A. Wilson

TO: The Honorable Detroit City Council

FROM: David Whitaker, Director 
Legislative Policy Division (LPD)

DATE: July 31, 2020

RE: RESOLUTION OPPOSING HAZARDOUS MATERIALS
TRANSPORT ON THE AMBASSADOR BRIDGE

Council Member Castañeda-López directed the Legislative Policy Division to draft a resolution opposing the recent request of the Ambassador Bridge Co. for permission to transport hazardous materials on the bridge, which is not safely designed for such activity. The requested resolution is attached.

If Council has any other questions or concerns regarding this subject, LPD will be happy to provide further research and analysis upon request.

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING DANGEROUS TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS ON THE AMBASSADOR BRIDGE DUE TO THE AGE AND DESIGN
LIMITATIONS OF THE BRIDGE MAKING SUCH TRANSPORT UNSAFE**

By Council Member Raquel Castañeda-López

WHEREAS, Detroit City Council strongly opposes the latest effort by the Detroit International Bridge Company to allow hazardous materials to be transported across the 91-year old Ambassador Bridge, which connects Detroit in the United States with neighboring Windsor, Ontario, Canada; and

WHEREAS, the bridge company in May 2020, upon information and belief is seeking to take advantage of a temporary emergency waiver solely for emergency supplies (such as large shipments of hand sanitizer containing flammable alcohol), requested that Michigan's Department of Transportation allow trucks to carry flammable, chemical or corrosive materials across the four-lane bridge connecting Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario; and

WHEREAS, in 2014 the Michigan Department of Transportation ruled against permitting hazardous materials to be transported across the Ambassador Bridge following widespread political and community opposition to the request, in particular because the age and design of the structure make it inherently unsafe for such activity, primarily due to the inability of emergency personnel and equipment to reach the scene in the event of a serious accident; and

WHEREAS, transportation of such hazardous chemicals has long been, and is currently allowed across the Detroit River by the Windsor-Detroit truck ferry; and

WHEREAS, transporting of hazardous materials across the Ambassador Bridge has been ruled excessively dangerous due to the lack of necessary safety measures and emergency planning in case of an accident that would close the bridge, one of the busiest trade crossings in North America, should damage occur; and

WHEREAS, community feedback continues to vehemently oppose such transportation as little has changed in terms of emergency planning, including containment of a spill and/or fire, maintaining an adequate water supply and contamination of the Detroit River; and

WHEREAS, the bridge is in proximity to thousands of residents on both sides of the border and contaminants that would probably be released in an accident involving transportation of hazardous materials have been linked to severe health problems, including, but not limited to, testicular and kidney cancer, thyroid disease, and respiratory and immune system disorders;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council strongly opposes any renewed efforts by the Detroit International Bridge Company leading to the authorization of the transport of any hazardous and toxic materials between Windsor, Ontario, Canada and Detroit, Michigan, via the Ambassador Bridge; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council calls on the Michigan Department of Transportation and the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy to work to prevent the transport and/or disposal of hazardous or toxic materials on the Ambassador Bridge; and, be it further

RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution be forwarded to Governor Gretchen Whitmer, Lieutenant Governor Garlin Gilchrist, Michigan Department of Transportation Director Paul C. Ajegba, Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy Director Liesl Eichler Clark, U.S. Senators Debbie Stabenow and Gary Peters, U.S. Representative Debbie Dingell, Congresswoman Rashida Tlaib, Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens and Vice Chair Matthew T. Maroun and President Dan Stamper of the Detroit International Bridge Company.