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# NEWS RELEASE

## **I-10 Bridge Task Force Reports from State's Joint Transportation Committee Meeting**

Members of the I-10 Bridge Task Force attended a meeting of the state legislature's Joint Transportation Committee today where LA DOTD Secretary Shawn Wilson presented an update on the state's plan for a new I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge.

The state is beginning the process to construct a new I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge using a P3 method, which is a public private partnership. The Chamber SWLA's I-10 Bridge Task Force has been working with the state for several years to develop a plan for a replacement bridge.

With a P3, bids will be obtained from private companies to construct a new bridge. The company will collect a toll to pay for construction. A P3 with tolling is a proven solution for infrastructure projects across the country. According to I-10 Task Force Chairman Keith DuRousseau, a P3 essentially harnesses private expertise for public benefit. "This bid process will take two years and the project will be awarded based on various criteria, one of which will be the amount of the toll. The Task Force and the state favor the lowest toll possible for the shortest period of time."

Other funding options for replacing the bridge structure are not currently available, but DuRousseau states that replacing the aging, inadequate structure cannot continue to be delayed as it has been for over 30 years. "Complete federal funding from President Trump's promise to build a new bridge if re-elected is in question and we believe the P3 plan should be pursued for a new bridge to be built. The I-10 Task Force continues to support, and will continue to help pursue, any and all available funding, such as federal grants, possible federal infrastructure bills, state funds and environmental settlements to lower the amount financed."

Every year the project is delayed results in about \$25 million per year in increased costs due to inflation.

"We ask residents to withhold judgement on the process until the bids are received and specific information is available," adds George Swift, President and CEO of the Southwest Louisiana Economic Development Alliance. "We thank Governor John Bel Edwards and LA DOTD Secretary Shawn Wilson for taking action and beginning the process for the new bridge our region needs."

*Learn more about the I-10 Calcasieu River Bridge Task Force's efforts to securing funding for a replacement bridge at [www.buildourbridge.org](http://www.buildourbridge.org).*