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State funding for Bridgeport Bridge passes first budget hurdle

After meeting with the members of the South Yuba River Park Association, Sen. Jim Nielsen (R-Gerber) joined the campaign to save the iconic covered bridge at the South Yuba River State Park.

At Thursday's meeting in Sacramento, Nielsen, along with the members of the Senate Subcommittee 2, voted to pass Gov. Brown's proposed funding of \$318,000 from federal monies to begin the restoration of the bridge, according to a news release.

"California's Gold Rush was a significant part of our history that must be preserved so future generations can learn and enjoy the past," Nielsen said in the release.

"The Bridgeport Covered Bridge is a pivotal part of our history and has been closed for too long."

"It needs to be restored and reopened for the public to enjoy," Nielsen added.

"The bridge is an irreplaceable historic asset and a significant tourist attraction for our region. We can't afford to wait any longer while this project deteriorates further."

Nevada City Councilman Robert Bergman

Constructed in 1862, the bridge was responsible for the movement of supplies and people along the Virginia Turnpike toward the gold and silver fields during the late 1800s.

It is the longest single-span wood, covered bridge remaining in the world.

In 2011, the Department of Parks and Recreation closed the bridge to all visitors due to structural problems caused by old age and extreme weather conditions.

This funding, if approved by the legislature and signed into the budget by the governor, would allow for the replacement of the structural supports and other repairs to make the bridge fundamentally sound for visitors.

Led by David Anderson, the South Yuba River State Park Association, along with local officials, mobilized and coordinated their efforts to save the bridge for historic and economic purposes to the region.

Supervisor Hank Weston, Douglas Moon, Shirley Moon, Mickey Springer and Nevada City Councilman Robert Bergman went to the Capitol in support of the funding.

“The bridge is an irreplaceable historic asset and a significant tourist attraction for our region. We can’t afford to wait any longer while this project deteriorates further,” said Bergman.

Sen. Jim Nielsen represents the Fourth Senate District, which includes the counties of Butte, Colusa, Del Norte, Glenn, Nevada, Placer, Sacramento, Shasta, Siskiyou, Sutter, Tehama, Trinity and Yuba.

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