



www.ambassadorbridge.com

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 15, 2023

Contact:
Kenneth Dobson
Vice President – Ambassador Bridge
586-939-7000 ext. 2555
kdobson@ambassadorbridge.com

**Ambassador Bridge Statement Regarding Michigan Department of Transportation
Public Notice Seeking Comment on Proposal to Lift Restrictions On Class 3 and Class 8
Hazardous Materials on the Ambassador Bridge**

The Ambassador Bridge has proposed lifting the restrictions on Class 3 and Class 8 non-radioactive hazardous materials. MDOT is opening a public comment period on the proposal. Lifting restrictions on Class 3 and Class 8 hazardous materials on the Ambassador Bridge will dramatically improve safety in the State of Michigan and enhance the smooth flow of international commerce in the Detroit-Windsor corridor.

Class 3 hazardous materials consist primarily of liquid petroleum products, including gasoline and diesel fuel. Every year, approximately 4,200 truckloads of liquid petroleum depart refineries and fuel terminals in Southwest Detroit and Romulus, pass the Ambassador Bridge, and drive an additional 60 to 70 miles through heavily populated areas in Detroit, Wayne County, and Macomb County to cross at the Blue Water Bridge. Considering just these 4,200 truckloads, lifting the restrictions will reduce the number of miles driven by commercial motor vehicles hauling Class 3 materials in Michigan by over 250,000 miles annually providing a substantial net safety benefit to the State of Michigan.

Class 8 hazardous materials include many items used to produce common goods such as batteries, paints, fertilizers, detergents, textiles, soaps and pharmaceuticals. As electric vehicles become more prevalent, the requirement to efficiently and safely move these critical commodities through the Detroit-Windsor corridor will increase and with the closure of the Detroit-Windsor Ferry the Ambassador Bridge is in a position to meet those needs.

The Ambassador Bridge is fully equipped to handle Class 3 and Class 8 hazardous materials. The Ambassador Bridge has handled Class 2 (gases), Class 4 (flammable solids), Class 5 (oxidizers and organic peroxides), Class 6, except Class 6.2, (poisonous materials) and Class 9 (miscellaneous) for decades without incident. Under the Ambassador Bridge's proposal, Class 3 and Class 8 truckloads will be escorted across the bridge by safety vehicles. The fire suppression system on the Ambassador Bridge meets all applicable codes, is designed to address incidents arising from all of the foregoing Classes of hazardous materials and is regularly inspected by the City of Detroit Fire Department and the City of Windsor Fire and Rescue Services.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why is MDOT doing this now?

In September 2020, the Ambassador Bridge filed a petition with MDOT requesting that MDOT lift the restrictions on Class 3 and Class 8 materials. Around that time, the Ambassador Bridge posted the petition on its website at <https://www.ambassadorbridge.com/hazardous-materials/>. In the interim, MDOT has visited the bridge, studied the issue and requested additional information. The result of MDOT's study is embodied in the notice of intent published by MDOT. According to MDOT, "the proposed recommendations address public safety while seeking to ensure continuity of movement and not limit or delay transportation of hazardous materials."

Does the Ambassador Bridge have proper safety precautions in place?

Yes. Class 3 and Class 8 materials will receive safety escorts when crossing the Bridge. The fire suppression system on the Ambassador Bridge meets all code requirements and is designed to address incidents arising from all of the foregoing Classes of hazardous materials and is annually inspected by the City of Detroit Fire Department and the City of Windsor Fire and Rescue Services.

Additionally, the Ambassador Bridge has long had an emergency response plan in place to address critical incidents on the Bridge. The Ambassador Bridge regularly interacts with federal, state and local first responders, including participating in table top exercises, and has agreements in place with local emergency response firms to ensure timely and complete responses to incidents on the Bridge.

The City of Detroit engaged in a multi-agency review the Ambassador Bridge's petition to lift the restrictions, inspected the Bridge, and concluded that the Bridge has "all of the safety precautions in place and over all the plan looks good", "the life safety systems are in compliance, and I especially like the escort plan they have . . .", "the Emergency Response Plan has been received, reviewed and approved", and "the Ambassador Bridge has a spill containment system".

The Detroit Police Department wrote:

"If the request is approved, an increase in semi-truck traffic on the bridge is anticipated but poses no significant impact on the surrounding areas, surface or residential streets. Based on my observations while assigned to the Fourth Precinct, the majority of all Ambassador Bridge traffic directs on to I-75 once cleared, not into Southwest Detroit. No information provided has indicated that changing the restrictions would increase traffic by any substantial amount. Currently, Class 3 and Class 8 materials are not prohibited on area roads; therefore, any change in restrictions will not introduce new materials in the area. Approval of the request will have no apparent impact on the day-to-to day operations of the Fourth Precinct."

The Memorandum reflecting the City of Detroit's multi-agency review of the Ambassador Bridge's petition to lift the restrictions on Class 3 and Class 8 hazardous materials is posted on the Ambassador Bridge website here: <https://www.ambassadorbridge.com/hazardous-materials/>

Will lifting the restriction increase traffic on the Ambassador Bridge?

Minimally. In 2022, according to the Bridge and Tunnel Operators Association, 2,302,992 trucks crossed the Ambassador Bridge. We estimate an additional 10,000 to 20,000 crossings annually, which is a .4% to .86% increase. Notably, lifting the restrictions will decrease miles driven by trucks hauling Class and Class 8 in Michigan.

Didn't MDOT previously consider this request?

In 2012, MDOT issued a report recommending that the restrictions on Class 3 and Class 8 hazardous materials on the Ambassador Bridge should be lifted. Nevertheless, the restrictions were not lifted. In the interim, the Ambassador Bridge upgraded its fire suppression system and enacted other safety measures. After that work was completed, the Ambassador Bridge filed its petition again requesting that the restrictions on Class 3 and Class 8 be lifted.

Would this allow radioactive or explosive materials on the Ambassador Bridge?

No. Those materials have never been allowed on the Ambassador Bridge and the Ambassador Bridge has never requested permission to allow them on the Bridge.

What is the current condition of the Ambassador Bridge?

The Ambassador Bridge is an iconic structure and over the last decade a number of projects have been undertaken to ensure the bridge remains a safe and viable border crossing, including a complete re-decking and new railing. These projects and others have extended the useful life of the Bridge by for many decades, and for the new deck and railings, up to 75 years. Additional information is available at: <https://www.ambassadorbridge.com/restoring-the-ambassador-bridge/>.

About the Ambassador Bridge

The Ambassador Bridge is a tolled suspension bridge across the Detroit River that connects Detroit, Michigan in the United States with Windsor, Ontario in Canada. The Bridge and its related companies provide employment for over 20,000 worldwide and nearly 1,000 in the City of Detroit.

Learn more about the Ambassador Bridge at www.ambassadorbridge.com.