



16590  
June 8, 2018

Mr. James Wolfe, P.E  
District Six Secretary  
Florida Department of Transportation  
1000 NW 111th Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33172

Dear Secretary Wolfe,

I received your letter dated May 29, 2018, requesting a change to the drawbridge operating regulations at the Brickell Avenue Bridge ("Brickell Bridge"), mile 0.1, across the Miami River, Miami, Florida. The requested change includes a reduction of the morning operating schedule curfew by thirty minutes, with a corresponding increase of thirty minutes to the afternoon operating schedule curfew. Specifically, you requested to modify the drawbridge opening schedule as follows:

The draw of the Brickell Avenue Bridge, mile 0.1, at Miami, shall open on signal; except that, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Friday except Federal holidays, the draw need open only on the hour and half-hour. From 8:05 a.m. to 8:59 a.m., 12:05 p.m. to 12:59 p.m., and 5:05 p.m. to 6:59 p.m., Monday through Friday except Federal holidays, the draw need not open for the passage of vessels.

The Coast Guard is charged with balancing all modes of transportation and commerce, both maritime and terrestrial. We take very seriously our role as a community partner, and weigh all input received from public, private, and industrial sectors against anticipated impacts to the same in considering requests to change regulations. Based on feedback received to date, the Coast Guard is considering implementation of a test deviation from the existing regulation for a period of up to 180 days.

However, any deviation or change to the existing Brickell Bridge regulation would be ineffective without implementation of a broader, comprehensive plan to address the vehicular traffic issues. Such a plan has been discussed in the past, with stakeholders – to include FDOT, the Coast Guard, MRMG, DDA, the Miami River Commission, and the Miami Police Department – identifying specific initiatives that, if taken together, would work to alleviate traffic congestion. For example, the MRMG entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with their members, agreeing to avoid Miami River transits during existing curfew periods. Marine Industry modified tugs so that they could pass under the Brickell Bridge without requiring it to open. The Coast Guard also took action and modified the original operation schedule to accommodate increased traffic congestion for several bridges along the Miami River, to include the Brickell Bridge, as well as engaging the Marine and Coastal Research Corporation to conduct a comprehensive traffic study of the Miami River. The results of that study showed that expansion of the curfew periods in the existing regulation may cause traffic (pedestrian, bicycle, and vehicular) on the Brickell Bridge to worsen, due to increased marine vessels queuing during the curfew period.

June 8, 2018

If implemented, any period of test deviation should be used by FDOT to conduct reliable traffic studies that will provide valid metrics upon which a satisfactory cooperative plan for future action can be based. To aid in my consideration of the request to change the Brickell Bridge curfew periods, please identify a period of time when a test deviation could be accompanied by both appropriate traffic data collection and implementation of these additional measures that have been recommended by other stakeholders:

- a. Pedestrian gates to prevent pedestrians from delaying drawbridge opening.
- b. Maximizing the number of open traffic lanes.
- c. Optimizing traffic signal sequencing for queue clearing.
- d. Policing the area to assist with traffic and pedestrian law enforcement.

It should also be noted that, even during curfew periods, public vessels of the United States, tugs, tugs with tows, and vessels in a situation where a delay would endanger life or property shall, upon proper signal, be passed through the draw of the Brickell Bridge.

If I can be of further assistance in this matter or if you have any questions, please contact me or my staff at (305) 415-6743.

Sincerely,



L. A. ALLEN  
Captain, U. S. Coast Guard  
Chief, Prevention  
Seventh Coast Guard District  
By direction

Copy: U. S. Coast Guard, Sector Miami  
Mayor Francis Suarez, City of Miami  
Alyce Robertson, Executive Director, Miami Downtown Development Authority  
Mark Bailey, Executive Director, Miami River Marine Group