

A task force that will help the Crescent City Connection make the transition to being toll-free will be appointed next month, and that's a sensible step for the bridge's future.

The Louisiana Legislature approved Senate Concurrent Resolution 47 by Sen. David Heitmeier. It calls for Gov. Bobby Jindal to name the task force by July 15 from nominees submitted by business and civic groups, law enforcement, the Regional Planning Commission, local ports and other organizations.

Bridge tolls are due to expire at the end of 2012, and audits that have found questionable spending as well as a report by the Bureau of Governmental Research, make a strong case for allowing that to happen. Crescent City Connection users have been paying for lots of things that have little or no benefit to them, and that's unfair.

The task force will review audits, financial reports and "regional and national best practices." It also will consider the CCC's structure, governance and administration and consider issues such as traffic control, sources and uses of revenue and the administration and operation of ferry services.

The resolution calls for fast action. The task force must hold its first meeting by Aug. 1, and its recommendations are due to the Legislature by Feb. 1.

That gives lawmakers plenty of time to address the bridge's future before the tolls expire.