

**Second Regular Session
Seventy-fourth General Assembly
STATE OF COLORADO**

INTRODUCED

LLS NO. R24-0928.01 Lauren Hackett x2291

HJR24-1017

HOUSE SPONSORSHIP

Soper and Weissman,

SENATE SPONSORSHIP

Will and Roberts,

House Committees

Senate Committees

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 24-1017

101 **CONCERNING RENAMING BRIDGE I-04-K ON U.S. HIGHWAY 50 OVER**
102 **THE GUNNISON RIVER AS THE "BRIGADIER GENERAL FELIX**
103 **SPARKS MEMORIAL BRIDGE".**

1 WHEREAS, Brigadier General Felix Sparks was a famous resident
2 of Delta, Colorado who made significant contributions to the peace,
3 safety, and general welfare of our great state and nation as a World War
4 II war hero who helped liberate the Dachau concentration camp and was
5 also a District Attorney for Colorado's 7th Judicial District, the longtime
6 Director of the Colorado Water Conservation Board, an Associate Justice
7 of the Colorado Supreme Court, and a Brigadier General of the Colorado
8 National Guard; and

9 WHEREAS, Sparks was born in San Antonio, Texas on August 2,
10 1917, and raised in the small copper mining town of Miami, Arizona; and

Shading denotes HOUSE amendment. Double underlining denotes SENATE amendment.
Capital letters or bold & italic numbers indicate new material to be added to existing law.
Dashes through the words or numbers indicate deletions from existing law.

1 WHEREAS, Sparks enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1936 and served
2 two years on active duty before joining the Army Reserve and attending
3 the University of Arizona; and

4 WHEREAS, Sparks was called to active duty for World War II in
5 1939 and commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1940; and

6 WHEREAS, Through combat in Sicily, Italy, France, and
7 Germany, Sparks served with the 45th Infantry Division's 157th Infantry
8 Regiment and, near the end of the war, was commander of the 157th
9 Infantry's 3rd Battalion, which he led during the liberation of the Dachau
10 concentration camp; and

11 WHEREAS, Sparks was awarded the French Croix de Guerre and
12 twice awarded the Silver Star and Purple Heart for his wartime efforts;
13 and

14 WHEREAS, After the war, Sparks came to Colorado where he
15 attended law school at the University of Colorado, graduated with his
16 Bachelor of Laws degree in 1947, and immediately began practicing law
17 in Delta, Colorado at the law firm of Sparks, Willett, Conklin, and
18 Carroll; and

19 WHEREAS, Sparks' law firm and the names associated with it
20 would go on to make history, with Willett's son, Yeulin Willett, and
21 Carroll's granddaughter, Morgan Carroll, serving in the Colorado state
22 legislature and Charles Conklin serving as Speaker of the House from
23 1957 until 1960; and

24 WHEREAS, In 1948, Sparks was elected District Attorney for the
25 7th Judicial District, and he served as an Associate Justice of the
26 Colorado Supreme Court in 1956; and

27 WHEREAS, In 1958, Sparks was appointed Director of the
28 Colorado Water Conservation Board, a position he maintained until his
29 retirement in 1979; and

30 WHEREAS, Along with his leadership on the Colorado Water
31 Conservation Board, Sparks was a commissioner on the Upper Colorado
32 River Commission and represented the state in important water resource
33 management negotiations including negotiations that led to the passage

1 of the 1968 Colorado River Basin Project Act; and

2 WHEREAS, Sparks' work on the Colorado Water Conservation
3 Board and Upper Colorado River Commission led to the funding and
4 construction of several Colorado river projects including the Dolores
5 Project, the Dallas Creek Project, and the Animas-La Plata Project; and

6 WHEREAS, Sparks was a lead drafter on the 1969 Water Rights
7 Determination and Administration Act, and in 1972 he took a lead role in
8 developing Colorado's initial instream flow protection program; and

9 WHEREAS, Sparks continued his military service until 1977,
10 working his way up the ranks of the Colorado National Guard and
11 eventually being promoted to Brigadier General and serving as Assistant
12 Adjutant General for Army and Commander of the Colorado Army
13 National Guard; and

14 WHEREAS, On September 25, 2007, at the age of 90, Sparks
15 passed away of pneumonia in Denver; and

16 WHEREAS, In 2020, Netflix released a docudrama titled "The
17 Liberator" that is based on Sparks' leading of his battalion to free the
18 prisoners of the Dachau concentration camp in World War II; and

19 WHEREAS, While Sparks may be best remembered for his heroic
20 military career, he was also one of our state's most accomplished leaders
21 in water legislation, and his work continues to have ripple effects to this
22 day; now, therefore,

23 *Be It Resolved by the House of Representatives of the*
24 *Seventy-fourth General Assembly of the State of Colorado, the Senate*
25 *concurring herein:*

26 That it is fitting and proper to rename the U.S. highway 50 bridge
27 over the Gunnison river in Delta as the "Brigadier General Felix Sparks
28 Memorial Bridge", and that funds from gifts, grants, and donations be
29 used to pay for appropriate signage indicating the bridge's name.

30 *Be It Further Resolved*, That copies of this Joint Resolution be sent
31 to the Colorado Department of Transportation, the Colorado Water
32 Conservation Board, the Colorado Department of Natural Resources, the
33 City of Delta, Delta County, the Colorado River District, the Delta

1 County Historical Society, and members of the Sparks family.