

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

**ENGROSSED**

LLS NO. R24-0928.01 Lauren Hackett x2291

**HJR24-1017**

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**SENATE SPONSORSHIP**

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**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".**

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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.*

HOUSE  
Final Reading  
February 23, 2024

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.