

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action:	Do Pass
Vote:	8 - 0 - 0
Yeas:	Boone, Esquivel, Freeman, Komp, Matthews, Riley, Weidner, Cowan
Nays:	0
Exc.:	0
Prepared By:	David Molina, Administrator
Meeting Dates:	4/21, 5/19

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes an honorary designation of U.S. Highway 97 and portions of State Highway 126 in Oregon be known as World War II Veterans Historic Highway. Recognizes and honors the service, sacrifice, and dedication of Oregonian WWII veterans. Educates and informs the local communities and traveling public of the vital role U.S. 97 played during WWII.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- U.S. Highway 97 unique connection to Oregon's contribution to WWII
- Timeliness due to the passing of WWII veterans every day
- The need to honor the patriotism of the 10,400 Oregonians from the area who served and remember the 261 Oregonians who died during WWII
- The need to educate and inform the local communities and traveling public through roadside signs that identify historic WWII sites
- National trend to honor WWII veterans
- Widespread support among post-WWII veterans, veterans advocacy organizations, historic society and community organizations, and elected officials

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: During World War II (WWII), U.S. Highway 97, which runs north-south from Biggs on the Columbia River to the Oregon-California line along the east side of the Cascade Mountains, was used by the U.S. military to strategically position eight military training sites. These sites included U.S. Army Camp Rufus, U.S. Army Air Field Madras, Prineville Civilian Pilot Training, U.S. Army Air Field Redmond, Bend Civilian Pilot Training, U.S. Army Camp Abbot, U.S. Marine Corps Barracks & Hospital Klamath Falls, and Naval Air Station Klamath Falls. The largest military training exercise in the Pacific Northwest during WWII, known as "Oregon Maneuver," involved more than 100,000 citizen-soldiers directly impacting six counties along U.S. 97. Approximately sixteen million Americans served in WWII, including 10,400 Oregonians from the six rural counties along the route, of which 261 made the ultimate sacrifice to liberate Europe and the Pacific theater.

Senate Bill 449 provides an honorary designation of U.S. 97 and portions of State Highway 126 be known as World War II Veterans Historic Highway. The measure prohibits the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) from using public funds for the installation and maintenance of the markers; however, it allows ODOT to accept moneys and to enter into agreements with veterans and other groups to create, install and maintain the markers. The measure does not change the existing official name, maps, addresses or other designations of U.S. 97.

Eleven other states have implemented similar legislation memorializing WWII and Pearl Harbor: California, Colorado, Georgia, Kansas, Michigan, Mississippi, New Jersey, Oklahoma, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin. In addition to Oregon, two states have introduced legislation in the 2009 session: California and Missouri. Proponents of Senate Bill 449 assert the need to recognize, honor and remember the legacy of America's Greatest Generation.

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This summary has not been adopted or officially endorsed by action of the committee.