

REVENUE: No revenue impact

FISCAL: Minimal fiscal impact, no statement issued

Action: Do Pass
Vote: 4 - 0 - 1
Yeas: Bates, Kruse, Morse, Monnes Anderson
Nays: 0
Exc.: Morrisette
Prepared By: Robert Shook, Administrator
Meeting Dates: 3/12

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES: Establishes that US Highway 97 in Oregon be known as World War II Veterans Historic Highway.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Rename US Highway 97 or add additional signage and markers on Hwy 97
- Veterans Highway honoring all veterans
- Cost and maintenance of signage and markers

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT: No amendment.

BACKGROUND: US Highway 97, known as the Dallas-California Highway, crosses the State of Oregon beginning at the California state line and ending at the Washington state line. It is also designated a Blue Star Memorial Highway, but neither the official name of US Highway 97 nor the Blue Star designation would be changed by this bill. Blue Star Memorial Highways, designated by the National Garden Club, Inc. are memorial highways in the US that pay tribute to the US armed forces.

During World War II (WWII), US Highway 97 served eight critical military training sites at Rufus, Madras, Redmond, Prineville, Bend, Sunriver, and Klamath Falls. "Oregon Maneuver," the largest military training exercise in the Pacific Northwest during WWII involving more than 100,000 troops, occurred in the six counties served by US 97, plus 10,400 soldiers from those six counties served our nation, of which 261 made the supreme sacrifice during WWII.

This bill would cause US Highway 97, plus a portion of State Highway 126 from US 97 to Prineville-Crook County Airport, to be known as World War II Veterans Historic Highway, and require that the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) place and maintain suitable markers along the highways indicating the designation of, and proximity to local WWII military sites. The bill further states that ODOT may not use public funds for the installation and maintenance of the markers, but may accept funds from veterans groups to create, install and maintain the markers.