



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Director's Office

355 Capitol St. NE, MS 11

Salem, OR 97301

DATE: April 25, 2017

TO: Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

FROM: Paul Mather, Administrator
ODOT Highway Division

SUBJECT: House Bill 2100-A

INTRODUCTION

House Bill 2100-A directs the Oregon Department of Transportation to install and maintain markers in roadside rest areas and turnouts to recognize 26 Medal of Honor recipients. The bill also directs ODOT to install and maintain markers to designate US 20 as the Oregon Medal of Honor Highway.

DISCUSSION

The legislature has designated a number of Oregon's border to border highways over the last several sessions to honor a number of veterans groups. In addition, the legislature has instituted a program by which the Oregon Department of Transportation can install signs to honor individual police officers and members of the military who are killed in the line of duty.

These signs serve to remind the public of the sacrifices these officers, members of the military and their families have made. ODOT must balance installing memorial signs with needed regulatory, guide and motorist information signs that inform, guide and warn drivers. We are challenged in the metropolitan areas to find adequate space for both regulatory signs and memorial signs.

ODOT worked with members of the House Veterans and Emergency Preparedness Committee on amendments to the bill. The amendments moved the provided for placing the individual Medal of Honor signs in roadside rest areas and turnouts instead of on highways. Placing signs in roadside rest areas and turnouts provides more flexibility in the information can be placed on the signs; those that are placed on highways are very restricted in what they may contain. It also allows ODOT to reserve space on mainline highways for regulatory, guide and motorist information signs for drivers. In addition, those Medal of Honor recipients that were killed in the line of duty would also be eligible for the existing program established by the legislature and eligible for a sign on a highway.

In addition, the amendments moved the border to border designation from Interstate 5 to US 20 since I-5 already has two designations. Designating US 20 to as the Oregon Medal of Honor is in line with other designations made by the legislature for border to border highways. The legislature has made designations of: the Purple Heart Trail, Korean War Veterans Memorial Highway, Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway, World War I Veterans Memorial Highway,

April 25, 2017

Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Page 2

World War II Memorial Highway and the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan and Iraq Veterans Memorial Highway.

The bill specifies that ODOT will not use public funds to install and maintain the signs, but instead may accept money from veterans groups for the efforts. We will also work with the veterans groups on the placement of signs to ensure they are installed in meaningful locations.

SUMMARY

HB 2100-A designates US 20 as the Oregon Medal of Honor Highway and directs ODOT to install signs in rest areas and turnouts for individual Medal of Honor recipients. ODOT will work with veterans groups to find suitable locations and fund the efforts for the installation and maintenance of the signs.