

HB 2644 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Rep. Post

House Committee On Rules

Action Date: 04/01/21

Action: Do pass with amendments. (Printed A-Eng.)

Vote: 7-0-0-0

Yeas: 7 - Bonham, Drazan, Fahey, Holvey, Salinas, Smith Warner, Zika

Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact

Revenue: No revenue impact

Prepared By: Melissa Leoni, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/18, 4/1

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Finds and declares that the United States government has not sufficiently recognized the sacrifice of veterans who participated in cleanup and decontamination efforts of nuclear testing sites in the Marshall Islands. Renames portion of Interstate 5, beginning in Albany and ending in Salem, the Atomic Veterans and Atomic Cleanup Veterans Memorial Highway.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- History of the Marshall Islands and cleanup efforts
- Recognizing and thanking servicemembers for their sacrifice

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

Changes start date for participation in cleanup and decontamination efforts to 1962 from 1977.

BACKGROUND:

Between 1946 and 1958, the United States conducted 67 nuclear tests in the Marshall Islands, including 23 at Bikini Atoll and 44 near Enewetak Atoll, with the fallout from the tests spreading throughout the Marshall Islands. Approximately 6,000 servicemembers assisted in the cleanup operation, which deposited an estimated 85,000 cubic meters of contaminated soil, concrete, and military equipment in "Cactus Crater" on Runit Island.

ORS 366.924 (2019) recognizes Veterans Memorial Highways on five portions of U.S. highways and interstates. The portion of Interstate 5 that begins in Albany and ends in Salem, is currently designated the Atomic Veterans Memorial Highway. House Bill 2644 A renames that portion the Atomic Veterans and Atomic Cleanup Veterans Memorial Highway.