



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation

Director's Office

355 Capitol St. NE, MS 11

Salem, OR 97301

DATE: February 3, 2022

TO: Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

FROM: Lindsay Baker, Assistant Director, Government and External Relations
Oregon Department of Transportation

SUBJECT: SB 1509 – Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway (-3)
amendment

INTRODUCTION

Senate Bill 1509, with the (-3) amendment, creates the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway on OR 35. The measure directs the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) to install and maintain markers indicating the designation.

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 ODOT can install signs to honor individual police officers, firefighters, 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, firefighters, and 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.

The (-3) amendment changes the proposed name of the new memorial highway from the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Historic Highway to the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway, a change that is important to maintain consistency with the existing memorial highways and due to historic highways having different requirements for designation and maintenance. The amendment also clarifies the length of the new memorial highway. ODOT appreciates the willingness of the bill sponsor to make these changes through the (-3) amendment.

SUMMARY

SB 1509 designates OR 35 as the Oregon Nisei Veterans World War II Memorial Highway. As with Oregon's other memorial highways, ODOT may not use public funds for the installation and maintenance of the markers and will rely on moneys from veterans groups to pay for the creation, installation, and maintenance of the markers. ODOT appreciates the dedication from the bill sponsor to ensure that the sacrifices of Oregon's veterans are not forgotten, and we appreciate the clarifying language offered by the (-3) amendment.

Please feel free to reach out to me with any additional questions.