

HB 2644 -1 STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

House Committee On Rules

Prepared By: Melissa Leoni, LPRO Analyst

Meeting Dates: 3/18

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Finds and declares that the United States federal 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, as the Atomic Veterans and Atomic Cleanup Veterans Memorial Highway.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

-1 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. The U.S. conducted 23 of these tests at Bikini Atoll, and 44 near Enewetak Atoll, but fallout spread 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, beginning in Albany and ending in Salem, is currently known as the Atomic Veterans Memorial Highway. House Bill 2644 renames that portion to be the Atomic Veterans and Atomic Cleanup Veterans Memorial Highway.