

HB 2644 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Thomsen

Senate Committee On Veterans and Emergency Preparedness

Action Date: 05/11/21
Action: Do pass the A-Eng bill.
Vote: 3-1-0-0
Yeas: 3 - Manning Jr, Patterson, Thomsen
Nays: 1 - Linthicum
Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
Prepared By: Regina Wilson, LPRO Analyst
Meeting Dates: 5/4, 5/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Declares the United States government has not sufficiently recognized the sacrifice of veterans who participated in cleanup and decontamination efforts, between 1962 and 1980, 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:

- Recognition of veterans who participated in atomic cleanup efforts
- Other federal initiatives before Congress

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

Sixty-seven nuclear tests were conducted between 1946 and 1958 in the Marshall Islands, including 23 at Bikini Atoll and 44 near Enewetak Atoll, with 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.

Several of Oregon's roadways honor veterans throughout recent history. These dedications include the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Highway, through passage of Senate Bill 461 (2013), and the Warm Springs Veterans Memorial Highway designated through passage of House Bill 4023 (2014). Furthermore, House Bill 2036 (2015) combined several border-to-border initiatives to honor veterans of World War I; the Korean War; and the Persian Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Wars, along with recipients of the Purple Heart, designated the Purple Heart Trail.

House Bill 2644 A renames a portion of Interstate 5, currently designated the Atomic Veterans Memorial Highway, the Atomic Veterans and Atomic Cleanup Veterans Memorial Highway.