

SENATE BILL REPORT

SJM 8005

As of February 20, 2013

Brief Description: Requesting that state route number 117 be designated as the POW/MIA Memorial Highway.

Sponsors: Senators Hargrove, King, Sheldon, Eide, Hobbs, Hatfield, Benton, Padden, Shin and Chase.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 2/19/13.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Staff: Clint McCarthy (786-7319)

Background: Current law authorizes the Washington State Transportation Commission (WSTC) to name or rename state transportation facilities. The process to name or rename a facility can be initiated by the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), state and local governmental entities, citizen organizations, or by any individual person. In order for WSTC to consider the proposal, the requesting entity must provide sufficient evidence indicating community support and acceptance of the proposal. This evidence can include a letter of support from the state or federal legislator representing the area encompassing the facility to be renamed. Other evidence that would provide proof of community support includes a resolution passed by other elected bodies in the impacted area, WSDOT support, and supportive action from a local organization such as a chamber of commerce.

Summary of Bill: WSTC is requested to commence proceedings to name Highway 117 in Clallam County between the junction of Highway 101 and Marine Drive in the city of Port Angeles as the POW/MIA Memorial Highway. Copies of the memorial must be forwarded to the Secretary of Transportation, WSTC, and WSDOT.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: The idea for the memorial highway grew out of personal interaction with prisoners of war (POWs). The proponents of this bill do not want these men and women to be forgotten. There were 8000 POWs in the Korean War. A vast majority of the POWs did not survive. In August 1953, 4000 POWs were exchanged. The proponents were happy to see them return but were devastated to see the condition they returned in. We have thousands of memorials all over the world and they are all very important and part of our history. This Memorial would honor those who were prisoners of war and missing in action.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Sgt. Gerald Retella, Colonel Don Roberts, Korean War Veterans Assn.