

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HJM 4001

As Reported by House Committee On:
Transportation

Brief Description: Requesting the transportation commission to designate a section of Interstate 5 the Cowlitz County Deputy Sheriff Justin DeRosier memorial highway.

Sponsors: Representatives Orcutt, Walsh, McEntire, Abbarno, Christian and McClintock.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/9/23, 2/16/23 [DPS].

Brief Summary of Substitute Joint Memorial

- Requests the Washington State Transportation Commission to commence proceedings to designate a section of State Route 411 in Cowlitz County as the "Cowlitz County Deputy Sheriff Justin DeRosier Memorial Highway."

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: The substitute bill be substituted therefor and the substitute bill do pass. Signed by 26 members: Representatives Fey, Chair; Donaghy, Vice Chair; Timmons, Vice Chair; Barkis, Ranking Minority Member; Hutchins, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Low, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Robertson, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Bronoske, Chapman, Cortes, Dent, Doglio, Duerr, Entenman, Goehner, Hackney, Klicker, Mena, Orcutt, Ramel, Ramos, Schmidt, Taylor, Volz, Walsh and Wylie.

Staff: Christine Thomas (786-7142).

Background:

State Highway Facility Naming.

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

The Washington State Transportation Commission (Commission) is responsible for naming state transportation facilities, including state highways, bridges, rest areas, and other state highway facilities. The Commission's policy states, "a naming is done in a thorough and deliberative manner to honor and institute an enduring memory of a person or group of people who have contributed significantly to the well-being of the state or nation and with the widespread support of the people from the area in which the facility is located."

For the Commission to consider a 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 can provide proof of community support includes a resolution passed by other elected bodies in the impacted area, support from the Washington State Department of Transportation (WSDOT), and supportive action from a local organization such as a chamber of commerce.

If a naming request is submitted for a person who has recently died, the Commission does not act on the request for at least 12 months after the date of passing to allow for a respectful period of mourning and reflection.

Upon passage of a joint memorial requesting the naming of a facility, the Commission holds a public hearing prior to taking action. After the Commission takes final action in naming a state transportation facility, the WSDOT designs and installs the appropriate signs.

Cowlitz County Deputy Sheriff Justin DeRosier.

Deputy Sheriff Justin DeRosier served with the Cowlitz County Sheriff's Office for three years and had previously served with the Whitman County Sheriff's Office for three years. On April 13, 2019, Deputy DeRosier was shot in the line of duty and passed away shortly after midnight on April 14, 2019.

Summary of Substitute Joint Memorial:

The bill requests that the Commission commence proceedings to name the section of State Route 411 that traverses Cowlitz County from milepost 1.5 to milepost 12 the "Cowlitz County Deputy Sheriff Justin DeRosier Memorial Highway."

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill:

The substitute bill designates the section of State Route 411 from milepost 1.5 to 12 in Cowlitz County to be requested as the "Cowlitz County Deputy Sheriff Justin DeRosier Memorial Highway" rather than the section of Interstate 5 from milepost 20.3 to 57.13 in Cowlitz County.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony:

(In support) Justin DeRosier was a Deputy Sheriff for Cowlitz County who was shot in the line of duty and passed away shortly thereafter. Deputy DeRosier had deep roots in Cowlitz County and is described by family and friends as a good cop, a good person, and a loving son, husband, and father. Deputy DeRosier served as a reserve deputy for Cowlitz County, which inspired him to pursue a career in law enforcement. After graduating from Washington State University with a degree in criminal justice, he served as a deputy sheriff for Whitman County before returning home to work in Cowlitz County.

Following his passing, there was an outpouring of community support and numerous people reached out to the family to share examples of Deputy DeRosier's positive impact on the community. The community continues to support the memory of Deputy DeRosier with a vigil every April. The DeRosier family continues to give back through opportunities and scholarships for young people seeking a career in law enforcement.

It is difficult to send people out to protect and serve and they do not end up coming home. Naming the state highway after Deputy DeRosier is a small thing to do to honor the service that he provided and the sacrifice he made, and will remind travelers on the memorial highway about the people who protect and serve the State of Washington and the dangers they face every day. This bill will permanently honor Deputy DeRosier and memorialize this man who many consider a hero.

(Opposed) None.

Persons Testifying: Representative Ed Orcutt, prime sponsor; Kelly DeRosier; and Brad Thurman, Cowlitz County Sheriff.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.