

Date of Hearing: March 20, 2017

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

ACR 23 (Bocanegra) – As Amended March 7, 2017

SUBJECT: Ritchie Valens Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: Designates the portion of Interstate 5 (I-5) from State Route (SR) 118 to SR 170 in the County of Los Angeles as the “Ritchie Valens Memorial Highway”. Specifically, **this resolution:**

- 1) Recounts the life and career of Ritchie Valens, who lost his life at 17 in a tragic airplane crash.
- 2) Designates the portion of I-5 from SR 118 to SR 170 in the County of Los Angeles as the “Ritchie Valens Memorial Highway”.
- 3) Request that the Department of Transportation (Caltrans) determine the costs of erecting the appropriate signs consistent with the signing requirements for the state highway system, showing the special designation, and upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the costs, to erect the signs.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns Caltrans the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways including the installation and maintenance of highway signs.

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, but the resolution requests that Caltrans only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

COMMENTS: The author seeks to honor the life of Richard Steven Valenzuela or “Ritchie Valens,” who was born in Pacoima, California in 1941. Ritchie Valens was encouraged at a young age to learn to play music, including the guitar and trumpet and later the drums. He became popular at Pacoima High School for bringing his guitar to school to sing and play with his friends. At 16 years old, Ritchie Valens joined a local garage band called the Silhouettes, who played at dances and gatherings throughout the San Fernando Valley. In May 1958, Valens was discovered by a talent scout while playing with the Silhouettes in Pacoima. Later that month, after auditioning for Del-Fi Records, Valens was signed to a solo recording contract. Ritchie Valens had numerous hit songs including, “Come on, Let’s Go,” “La Bamba,” and “Donna,” an ode to his high-school girlfriend. In 1958, he appeared on Dick Clark’s American Bandstand television show and went on a multimember rock-and roll tour called the Winter Dance Party. On February 3, 1959, after leaving a performance in Clear Lake, Iowa, 17 year-old Ritchie Valens was killed in a private airplane crash with fellow musicians Buddy Holly, and J.P. “The Big Bopper,” Richardson. This tragedy was later immortalized as “the day the music died.” Ritchie Valens is known as a rock and roll pioneer and the forefather of the Chicano rock movement, inspiring others at a time when there were very few Latinos in American rock music. This resolution honors his life and contributions to American music and culture.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Melissa White / TRANS. /