

Date of Hearing: April 28, 2025

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Lori D. Wilson, Chair

ACR 37 (Wallis) – As Introduced February 20, 2025

SUBJECT: The Assistant Chief Josh Bischof, Captain Tim Rodriguez, and Pilot Tony Sousa Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: Designates the portion of State Route 10 from the Malki Road undercrossing to the East Cabazon Ramp overcrossing in the County of Riverside as the Assistant Chief Josh Bischof, Captain Tim Rodriguez, and Pilot Tony Sousa Memorial Highway. The measure requests the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs.

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

FISCAL EFFECT: Unknown, but the measure requests that Caltrans determine the cost of appropriate signage consistent with requirements for the state highway system, and only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

COMMENTS: On Sunday, August 6, 2023, two firefighting helicopters, a Sikorsky S-64E and a Bell 407, collided in the unincorporated community of Cabazon in the County of Riverside while battling the Broadway Wildland Fire.

Although the Sikorsky S-64E helicopter was able to land safely, the Bell 407 crashed, tragically taking the lives of Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) Assistant Chief Josh Bischof, CAL FIRE Captain Timothy “Tim” Rodriguez, and Contract Pilot Tony Sousa.

Assistant Chief Josh Bischof, who was born on June 17, 1977, began his firefighting career as a volunteer firefighter at Volunteer Fire Station 78 in the unincorporated community of Mountain Center in the County of Riverside. Bischof joined the San Bernardino National Forest Service Vista Grande Hotshots in 1998, moved on to CAL FIRE in 1999, and rose through the ranks to become an Assistant Chief with CAL FIRE’s Southern Region Headquarters in 2023. Bischof is survived by his wife of 24 years, Cheryl, their children, Derek and Juliana, and many other friends and loved ones.

Captain Tim Rodriguez, who was born on January 3, 1979, began his firefighting career by joining CAL FIRE as a Firefighter I, serving at Fire Station 41 in the unincorporated community of Mecca in the County of Riverside. Rodriguez was promoted through a series of ranks to fire captain in 2019, first serving in that capacity at Fire Station 14 in the City of Norco, and then at Hemet Ryan Air Attack Base as a helitack fire captain. Rodriguez is survived by his wife of 20 years, Dorothy, their three children, Joshua, Haley, and Alexis, and many other friends and loved ones.

Pilot Tony Sousa, who was born on November 11, 1967, held many jobs in his life, including as a dairy worker, Outlaw Kart salesperson, custom harvester, and helicopter pilot. Sousa not only achieved his lifelong dream by becoming a pilot, but he was also pivotal in implementing the

CAL FIRE Helicopter Coordinator (HLCO) training program. Sousa is survived by his wife, Rachelle, his two children, Connor and Carson, and many other friends and loved ones.

Assistant Chief Bischof, Captain Rodriguez, and Pilot Sousa lost their lives while serving the people of the State of California and their sacrifices shall never be forgotten.

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

None on file

Opposition

None on file

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