

Date of Hearing: July 1, 2019

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

SCR 32 (Morrell) – As Amended May 21, 2019

SENATE VOTE: 38-0

SUBJECT: United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: Designates a portion of State Route 38 (SR 38) in San Bernardino County as the "United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway."

Specifically, **this resolution:**

- 1) Extolls the virtues of wildland firefighters and of Firefighter Brent Michael Witham.
- 2) Designates the portion of SR 38 from Mill Creek Bridge to Mt Home Creek Bridge near the community of Mentone in San Bernardino County as the "United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway."
- 3) Requests that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) determine the cost of 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 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 resolution requests that Caltrans only erect the appropriate signage upon receiving donations from non-state sources covering the cost.

COMMENTS: Mr. Witham was born on July 9, 1988, in Redlands, California, to Mark Witham and Donna Giordano. Mr. Witham began his firefighting career in 2011 as a member of the Tahquitz Handcrew based in Riverside, California, and was assigned to Station 56 near Mountain Center, California, in the San Jacinto Mountains in 2013. He was a vital member of the Vista Grande Hotshot crew based in the San Bernardino National Forest of California.

Mr. Witham was only 29 years of age at the time of his passing. Mr. Witham is survived by his father, Mark Witham, his mother, Donna Giordano, his stepfather, Dave Giordano, his sister, Janelle Giordano, his grandparents, Ken and Donna Witham, and his uncle and aunt, Douglas and Linda Witham.

According to the author, "The men and women serving as Wildland Firefighters with the U.S. Forest Service protect millions of acres of our forests, our communities, and our natural resources, and have the unenviable task of protecting the public from the most dangerous natural disasters, and it is as difficult and dangerous as it is important, as evidenced by the death of U.S. Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham who lost his life in the line of service. It is appropriate for the California Legislature to pause to honor U.S. Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham, who made the ultimate sacrifice while performing his duty and to pay tribute to him, a fallen hero, by recalling his devotion, celebrating his life, and honoring his service."

The California Professional Firefighters support the measure “because this measure appropriately commemorates Brent’s bravery, while honoring his courage and selfless commitment to duty.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

California Professional Firefighters

Opposition

None on file

Analysis Prepared by: Eric Thronson / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093