

Date of Hearing: July 5, 2021

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

SCR 12 (Bates) – As Amended March 22, 2021

SENATE VOTE: 37-0

SUBJECT: CAL-FIRE Chief William R. Clayton Memorial Highway

SUMMARY: Designates the portion of Interstate 5 from La Costa Avenue (PM R44.071) to Cannon Road (PM R47.975) in the City of Carlsbad as the CAL-FIRE Chief William R. Clayton Memorial Highway.

EXISTING LAW: Assigns the Department of Transportation (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: It was with immense sadness and a deep sense of loss that word was received of the death of William R. Clayton on January 28, 2018, a renowned Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL-FIRE) Chief whose character and deeds in life merit gratitude and respectful acknowledgment by the people of the State of California.

Beginning his 50-year career in firefighting with the United States Forest Service at the Cleveland National Forest in southern California, Bill Clayton also served as a Fire Captain for the Orange County Fire Department, and as the Assistant Chief at the Rainbow Conservation Camp for CAL-FIRE. Bill Clayton also served as the Division Chief for CAL-FIRE, becoming the most decorated CAL-FIRE Chief in the history of that agency.

After initially retiring from CAL-FIRE in 1998, Bill Clayton felt the call to return to service and rejoined the agency until he retired again in 2006, when he joined the Sycuan Fire Department as its Chief. Bill Clayton later shared his experience and expertise as a consultant throughout the United States and around the world, traveling to Australia, Portugal, South America, and Iraq to teach wildland firefighting and emergency management.

Bill Clayton was awarded his first CAL-FIRE Medal of Valor in 1998 for his actions during a 1997 fire in Escondido, when he drove through a 50-foot wall of flames to rescue three people from their home near Lake Wohlford. Bill Clayton received several other awards and recognitions throughout his career and was presented with his second Medal of Valor in 2006 for his extraordinary efforts in both the Paradise and Cedar fires in the County of San Diego in 2003, when his courageous actions saved the lives of hundreds of people and prevented the devastation of downtown Julian.

A true legend in the fire service, Bill Clayton leaves many to mourn his passing and celebrate his legacy, including his son, Chris, his daughter, Anne, his grandchildren, Jacob and Talia, and his wife, Ila.

According to the author, “Chief Clayton was a real life action hero who saved hundreds of lives and entire towns from the ravages of fire. While no words can ever truly express the gratitude that we have for Chief Clayton, I hope the highway naming in his honor will further remind people of his commitment to public service.”

In support, the California Fire Chiefs Association writes, “Chief Clayton was a well-respected Chief who devoted his life to the fire service. His 50-year career included time with the U.S. Forest Service, the Orange County Fire Department and as the most decorated Cal-Fire Chief in the history of the agency having been awarded the Medal of Valor in 1998 for his heroic actions in rescuing three people in a fire near Lake Wohlford. He later received a second Medal of Valor for leading the extraordinary effort to protect hundreds of lives from the devastating fire in the community of Julian. After retiring with distinction from Cal-Fire, Chief Clayton went on to become the Chief of the Sycuan Fire Department. For all of these reasons, the California Association of Fire Chiefs and the Fire Districts Association of California strongly support SCR 12.”

REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:

Support

1 Individual
California Fire Chiefs Association
City of Escondido
Fire Districts Association of California
Public Policy Advocates LLC
San Diego County Fire Chiefs Association
San Diego; County of

Opposition

None on file.

Analysis Prepared by: Julia Kingsley / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093