

AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MARCH 24, 2008

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—2007—08 REGULAR SESSION

Assembly Concurrent Resolution

No. 107

Introduced by Assembly Member Cook
(Coauthor: Senator Battin)

February 22, 2008

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 107—Relative to the CDF Firefighter John D. Guthrie Memorial Highway.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 107, as amended, Cook. CDF Firefighter John D. Guthrie Memorial Highway.

This measure would designate a specified portion of State Highway Route 215 as the "CDF Firefighter John D. Guthrie Memorial Highway." The measure would request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost of appropriate signs so designating that portion of State Highway Route 215 and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering the cost, to erect those signs.

Fiscal committee: yes.

- 1 WHEREAS, As a young man growing up in Perris, California,
- 2 John Guthrie often volunteered to help the older men fight fires
- 3 in the rural community and always wanted to be a firefighter; and
- 4 WHEREAS, After a two years of service in the Navy, Guthrie
- 5 returned home and signed on with the United States Forest Service
- 6 as a firefighter, and, in 1954, was stationed at the El Cariso fire
- 7 station; and

1 WHEREAS, In 1955, Guthrie was hired by the California
2 Division of Forestry and began working at the Lake Elsinore
3 Station; and

4 WHEREAS, On July 8, 1959, two teenagers driving down the
5 curvy highway toward Lake Elsinore lost control of their truck
6 and it flew off of the roadway and down a 200-foot embankment,
7 sparking an inferno that became known as the Decker Canyon
8 Fire; and

9 WHEREAS, More than 500 California Division of Forestry ~~and~~,
10 United States Forest Service, *local, and volunteer* firefighters were
11 called to fight the Decker Canyon Fire, which swept out of the
12 hills and forced the evacuation of Lakeland Village; and

13 WHEREAS, Guthrie was a firetruck driver working at the fire
14 station on Old Town Temecula, and when the call went out Guthrie
15 and his crew headed north toward the billowing smoke; and

16 WHEREAS, Guthrie and his crew were sent off of the main
17 road about a mile east of El Cariso Village into a canyon to start
18 setting backfires and the shifting winds soon pushed a wall of
19 flame back up the canyon ~~and~~ toward their truck; and

20 WHEREAS, With the flames advancing on them, Guthrie
21 ordered the other firefighters back to the truck for protection,
22 despite the fact that there was not room in the truck for him; and

23 WHEREAS, Guthrie attempted to use a fire hose to wet himself
24 down for protection, but the fire hose was burned beyond use; and

25 WHEREAS, The flames rushed over the fire truck, charring it
26 and those inside and outside of it almost beyond recognition and
27 the six-man crew perished, some at the scene and others at hospitals
28 in the days and weeks that followed; and

29 WHEREAS, Twenty-seven other firefighters were injured
30 fighting the 1,700-acre blaze, some losing ears, fingers, and noses;
31 and

32 WHEREAS, Guthrie, with over 85 percent of his body burned,
33 began walking out of the canyon before others came to his aid and
34 an ambulance arrived to take him to the closest hospital, which
35 was located in Hemet; and

36 WHEREAS, Guthrie was the last firefighter to die, finally
37 succumbing to his injuries at Redland's hospital on September 14,
38 1959; and

39 WHEREAS, Guthrie left behind his wife Carlo and a young son
40 and daughter; and

1 WHEREAS, It is vital that the sacrifice by John Guthrie and the
2 other firefighters who were killed in the Decker Canyon Fire in
3 order to protect the citizens of California be remembered; now,
4 therefore, be it

5 *Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate*
6 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature hereby dedicates that
7 portion of State Highway Route 215 between the Ramona
8 Expressway Exit, at postmile 31.08, and its junction with State
9 Route 74, at postmile 26.31, in honor of John D. Guthrie by
10 officially designating that route as the CDF Firefighter John D.
11 Guthrie Memorial Highway; and be it further

12 *Resolved*, That the Department of Transportation is requested
13 to determine the cost of appropriate signs, consistent with the
14 signing requirements for the state highway system, showing this
15 special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate
16 sources sufficient to cover that cost, to erect those signs; and be it
17 further

18 *Resolved*, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies
19 of this resolution to the Department of Transportation and to the
20 author for appropriate distribution.