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**SCR-32 United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway.** (2019-2020)

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**Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 32**

**CHAPTER 138**

Relative to United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway.

[ Filed with Secretary of State August 28, 2019. ]

**LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST**

SCR 32, Morrell. United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway.

This measure would designate a specified portion of State Route 38 near the community of Mentone in the County of San Bernardino as the United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway. The measure would also request the Department of Transportation to determine the cost of appropriate signs showing this special designation and, upon receiving donations from nonstate sources covering that cost, to erect those signs.

Fiscal Committee: yes

WHEREAS, The men and women serving as wildland firefighters with the United States 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

WHEREAS, The job of a wildland firefighter is as difficult and dangerous as it is important, as evidenced by the death of United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham, who lost his life in the line of duty when he was struck and killed by a falling tree on Wednesday, August 2, 2017, while working on the Lolo Peak Fire in western Montana; and

WHEREAS, Brent Michael Witham was born on July 9, 1988, in Redlands, California, to Mark Witham and Donna Giordano, and was a member of the Vista Grande Hotshot crew based in the San Bernardino National Forest of California; and

WHEREAS, Hotshot crews are firefighters trained specifically for wildfire suppression. Brent loved the challenges of being part of this elite group of firefighters, and looked forward to going to work every day and worked hard to be a good role model, leader, and firefighter; and

WHEREAS, Brent was a member of one of 113 hotshot crews in the United States tasked with the serious job of either hiking or being airdropped to remote areas of the wilderness to fight fires, usually with just the equipment they can carry; and

WHEREAS, Brent 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; and

WHEREAS, Brent was only 29 years of age at the time of his passing, and had served six years as a hardworking professional who was eager to learn and be the best that he could be, according to Jody Noiron, San Bernardino National Forest Supervisor; and

WHEREAS, Even today, nearly two years after his passing, Brent is remembered by his fellow firefighters, his surviving family, and loved ones who honor his memory annually; and

WHEREAS, Brent 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; and

WHEREAS, Brent will be remembered as a skillful, courageous, and compassionate firefighter who was willing to do whatever it took to help others. Brent touched many lives with his great sense of humor, his compassion for the less fortunate, his way of turning people's weaknesses into strengths, and his overall love for life; and

WHEREAS, It is appropriate to pause to honor United States 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; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That the Legislature hereby designates the portion of State Route 38 between the Mill Creek Bridge #54-346 (post mile 9.601) and the Mt. Home Creek Bridge #54-1046 (post mile R12.279) near the community of Mentone in the County of San Bernardino as the United States Forest Service Firefighter Brent Michael Witham Memorial Highway; and be it further

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

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the Director of Transportation and to the author for appropriate distribution.