



HOWARD MARKLEIN

STATE SENATOR • 17TH SENATE DISTRICT

May 23, 2023

Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government Testimony on Senate Bill 249

Good Afternoon!

Thank you Chairman Tomczyk and committee members for hearing Senate Bill 249, which would designate and mark State Highway 80 as the Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial Highway.

On August 7, 1990, President George H. W. Bush issued the order to coordinate Operation Desert Shield as a response to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. As a result, U.S. troops and resources were sent to the Persian Gulf alongside a coalition of 35 nations to defend Saudi Arabia and liberate Kuwait. On November 29, 1990, the United Nations Security Council authorized the use of "all means necessary" and after negotiations broke down between the U.S. and Iraq, Congress authorized President H. W. Bush to use American troops in the conflict.

Wisconsin mobilized an estimated 10,400 personnel that came from Active Duty, Reserve and National Guard components. Units from Appleton, Green Bay, Beloit, and Wausau were staged at Fort McCoy and Volk Field, and then departed throughout the fall and winter of 1990 to 1991.

On January 17, 1991, U.S. forces moved into the combat phase, dubbed Operation Desert Storm. This consisted of a naval and aerial bombardment, followed by a ground assault on February 24, 1991. This decisive action led to a ceasefire 100 hours after the ground campaign had begun. With the invaders repelled, U.S. forces shifted again. This time, it was for humanitarian missions, such as sorting out refugees and assisting with the Kuwaitis' reoccupation.

Historically, Wisconsin has honored its veterans by designating a highway or bridge to be commemorated in their honor. Currently, the state has dedicated highways for veterans of WWI, WWII, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and Purple Heart recipients. We even have a bridge honoring veterans of the American Revolution. It is time that we extend the same honor to our veterans of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm.

I am thankful for the men and women who have served, their sacrifices and bravery. Please join me in supporting SB 249 to show our appreciation and say – THANK YOU!

This proposal has received bi-partisan support in both houses of the Legislature.

Thank you again to the committee for hearing SB 249, and your timely action on the bill.



TONY KURTZ

STATE REPRESENTATIVE • 50th ASSEMBLY DISTRICT

Testimony before the Senate Committee on Transportation and Local Government

Senate Bill 249

Good morning, Chairman Tomczyk and committee members. Thank you for holding this hearing today on Senate Bill 249, which would designate State Highway 80 as the Operations Desert Storm and Desert Shield Memorial Highway.

Wisconsin has a long tradition of honoring our veterans of specific conflicts by designating a highway or bridge to commemorate their sacrifices and hard work. Currently, the state has dedicated highways for veterans of World War I, World War II, the Korean War and the Vietnam War. We even have a bridge honoring veterans of the American Revolution.

Recently, I was approached by a veteran living in the 50th Assembly district who noticed that there is no such highway or bridge in Wisconsin to honor the service members who participated in the Gulf War.

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It is time that we show the same appreciation for our veterans of Operation Desert Shield and Operation Desert Storm that has been given to veterans of other conflicts.

Thank you for your consideration of Senate Bill 249. I'd be happy to answer any questions at this time.