

January 12, 2017

RN 17 50639

MEMBER'S RESOLUTION

By the Honorable Devon Mathis, 26th Assembly District;
Relative to the designation of historic highway

EL CAMINO SIERRA WITHIN INYO COUNTY

WHEREAS, Officially established by the California State Legislature in 1866, less than a year after the end of the Civil War, Inyo County celebrated its 150th anniversary on March 22, 2016, and in further commemoration of the County's sesquicentennial, it is appropriate to acknowledge the singular importance of El Camino Sierra as one of California's most historic and storied travel routes by reaffirming the designation of U.S. Highway 395, for the entirety of its length through the County from Pearsonville to Round Valley, as El Camino Sierra; and

WHEREAS, For many centuries prior to the earliest arrival of Europeans on the North American continent,

Native Americans used trade and travel routes following the course of the Owens River and through the Eastern Sierra region, while also living in the Owens Valley and other places along the path of El Camino Sierra, as revealed by a number of key Inyo County archaeological sites; and

WHEREAS, Intrepid nineteenth century military expeditions, trappers, explorers, and prospectors also used the ancient Native Americans' El Camino Sierra trailway, which later served as the basis for early wagon and stage routes, including those the '49ers used while seeking their fortunes during California's Gold Rush, and by the 1870s, El Camino Sierra represented a well-worn thoroughfare connecting Inyo County, and especially its gold and silver mining operations, with Los Angeles, a rapidly growing town and commercial center; and

WHEREAS, As the twentieth century dawned, the route El Camino Sierra traced through Inyo County provided a vital transportation link for the County's increasing numbers of farmers and ranchers, for additional products from the County's mines, and, between 1908 and 1913, for hundreds of mule-powered wagons that hauled construction materials and equipment to the site of the Los Angeles Aqueduct, one of the State's earliest and most audacious water conveyance projects; and

WHEREAS, The first automobile appeared in Southern California in 1897, and by 1904 Los Angeles boasted 1,600 automobiles, and with burgeoning interest in this mode of transportation, an important new focus of nascent economic development and opportunity in the region involved creating automobile access, via portions of El Camino Sierra's historic route, to scenic and recreational sites in the County and in the High Sierras beyond; and

WHEREAS, With remarkable foresight recognizing the widespread benefits that the creation of a highway along this route would bring to Inyo County, the Inyo Good Road Club tirelessly lobbied the State to build a highway to serve the needs of both curious tourists and businesses, and this singular effort won official approval on August 31, 1910, when the new highway project was dedicated by Governor James Gillett, who named the future highway, " El Camino Sierra," an already renowned name by which the route had long been familiarly known, but which was subsequently superseded, beginning in the 1930s, with the extension of U.S. Highway 395 into California; and

WHEREAS, California's second-largest county and the ninth largest in the nation, Inyo County is today traversed from its northernmost to southernmost boundaries by a portion of

U.S. Highway 395, 127 miles of which, from Pearsonville to Round Valley, trace the historic route of El Camino Sierra, a route now traveled by tens of millions of motorists each year which Inyo County, in tandem with its sesquicentennial commemoration, would like to formally reaffirm as El Camino Sierra to honor its rich history, as well as the far-sighted efforts of the Inyo Good Road Club, which have greatly benefited Californians and visitors for more than a century; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED BY ASSEMBLY MEMBER DEVON MATHIS, That, with this resolution, he pays tribute to the indelible legacy of El Camino Sierra in Inyo County, and joins with other Californians in recognizing and applauding ongoing efforts to reaffirm the historic designation of U.S. Highway 395 where it traverses Inyo County as El Camino Sierra.

Dated this ____ day of ____, ____.

Honorable Devon Mathis
26th Assembly District