

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009**

H

4

**HOUSE BILL 1021
Committee Substitute Favorable 5/12/09
Third Edition Engrossed 5/14/09
Senate State and Local Government Committee Substitute Adopted 6/10/09**

Short Title: U.S. 17/U.S. 70 Marine Corps Highway. (Public)

Sponsors:

Referred to:

April 2, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

1 AN ACT TO DESIGNATE A PORTION OF U.S. HIGHWAY 17 AND U.S. HIGHWAY 70
2 AS "THE U.S. MARINE CORPS HIGHWAY: HOME OF THE CAROLINA-BASED
3 MARINES SINCE 1941."
4

5 Whereas, during 1940, amid the escalating mobilization of World War II, the 1st
6 Marine Division and the 1st Marine Air Wings of the United States Marine Corps were in need
7 of an operational staging area on the east coast of the United States; and

8 Whereas, in the summer of 1940, Major John C. McQueen and his pilot, Captain
9 Verne McCaul, on the orders of then Major General Thomas Holcomb, Marine Corps
10 Commandant, undertook an aerial survey that covered the Atlantic and Gulf Coasts from
11 Norfolk, Virginia, to Corpus Christi, Texas, and determined that 14 miles of beach in Onslow
12 County, North Carolina, was the only suitable location for a Marine Corps base in the Eastern
13 United States; and

14 Whereas, in February 1941, President Roosevelt authorized an initial outlay of
15 \$1,500,000 for the survey and purchase of a 174-square-mile tract near Jacksonville, North
16 Carolina, and on April 5, 1941, the United States Congress authorized \$14,575,000 for the
17 base's construction; and

18 Whereas, on May 1, 1941, the Marine Barracks New River was formally established
19 as a major amphibious training ground and has grown since into the Marine Corps Base, Camp
20 Lejeune, partly bounded by U.S. Highway 17 in Jacksonville, North Carolina; and

21 Whereas, from April 1942 until desegregation of the Marine Corps in 1949,
22 Montford Point Camp in North Carolina was the exclusive training grounds for
23 African-American Marines; and

24 Whereas, from 1943 until passage of the Women's Armed Service Integration Act in
25 1948, the New River Base was the principal training center for the women Marines, having
26 trained over 20,000 women Marines; and

27 Whereas, in 1944 the United States Marine Corps assumed control of Camp Davis
28 at Holly Ridge when the United States Army declared it excess to their needs and utilized it to
29 train the Royal Netherlands Marine Corps; and

30 Whereas, other sites along or near U.S. Highway 17 in Eastern North Carolina have
31 historical significance to the United States Marine Corps, including major air stations at Cherry
32 Point and Edenton, North Carolina, and auxiliary or outlying landing fields at Atlantic Beach,
33 Beaufort, Bogue, Greenville, Manteo, New River, Oak Grove, Washington, and Wilson; and

34 Whereas, the Museum of the Marine currently being planned at Camp Lejeune in
35 Jacksonville, North Carolina, will honor the history of the Carolina-based Marines from World



1 War II to the present and highlight the many historically significant locations along U.S.
2 Highway 17; and

3 Whereas, estimates show that the Museum of the Marine has the potential to draw
4 100,000 visitors each year, and the designation of U.S. Highway 17 as a scenic byway will add
5 to this attraction; and

6 Whereas, the General Assembly desires to honor the United States Marine Corps'
7 large and enduring military presence at locations in Eastern North Carolina along U.S.
8 Highway 17; Now, therefore,

9 The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

10 **SECTION 1.** U.S. Highway 17 running between the Town of Holly Ridge and the
11 Town of Edenton, and the portion of U.S. Highway 70 running between the intersection of U.S.
12 Highway 70 and N.C. Highway 101 near Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station and the
13 intersection of U.S. Highway 70 and U.S. Highway 17 is designated as "The U.S. Marine Corps
14 Highway: Home of Carolina-Based Marines since 1941" in light of the historical contributions
15 of the United States Marine Corps.

16 **SECTION 2.** The Department of Transportation shall collaborate with the
17 Highway 17 Association, the Department of Commerce, and the Department of Cultural
18 Resources concerning the appropriate signage along the Highway designated in this act, in
19 order to maximize the economic development opportunities along the route of the Highway.
20 The Department of Transportation may contract with nongovernmental entities to produce,
21 install, and maintain the signs.

22 **SECTION 2.1.** No State funds shall be expended to purchase signage or for any
23 other purpose authorized by this act. All costs shall be paid by the Marine Corps Parkway
24 Association.

25 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.