



Director's Office

*An Arizona Management System Agency*

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October 13, 2017

Ryan Ehrfurth

Staff Support, Arizona State Board on Geographic and Historic Names

State of Arizona Research Library

Arizona State Library, Archives and Public Records

1901 West Madison Street

Phoenix, AZ 85009

Dear Mr. Ehrfurth,

The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) is in receipt of your letter addressed to the members of the State Transportation Board on September 27, 2017. It is the position of the Department that the "Jefferson Davis National Highway" designation, having been approved specifically for U.S. Route 80, no longer exists. The designation does not apply to State Route 80 or any other segment of former U.S. Route 80 as it existed in 1961.

In addressing the questions from the State Board on Geographic and Historic Names (Names Board), ADOT reviewed the research you compiled, as well as maps, meeting minutes, the ADOT Features Inventory System, and other documents. In doing so, the Department has made the following determinations:

- 1) The Arizona Highway Commission, at least from 1929, was repeatedly approached by representatives of the United Daughters of the Confederacy and others requesting the placement of markers designating the "Jefferson Davis National Highway" through Arizona. Those proposals were not acted on until 1961.
- 2) The Highway Commission at its November 27, 1961 meeting, approved a request from the Jefferson Davis Highway Committee, and designated U.S. Route 80 through Arizona as the "Jefferson Davis National Highway." The minutes of the meeting indicate that of the 15 states the route traversed, Arizona was the final state to adopt the "Jefferson Davis National Highway" designation.
- 3) With development of the Interstate Highway System, much of U.S. Route 80 was replaced by Interstate highways.
- 4) In 1989, the remaining portion of U.S. Route 80 in Arizona was reclassified and became State Route 80.
- 5) There is no longer a coast-to-coast highway named as U.S. Route 80 carrying the Jefferson Davis designation.
- 6) There is no "official" federally adopted name. No coast-to-coast designation was ever recognized by the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads or the Federal Highway Administration.
- 7) There are no ADOT-owned or -maintained signs or monuments currently in place along any ADOT-maintained highway recognizing a "Jefferson Davis National/Memorial Highway."
- 8) There is a privately owned memorial to Jefferson Davis on U.S. Route 60 (which formally carried highway designations for U.S. Routes 60, 70, 80, and 89) between Apache Junction and Florence Junction. This memorial is not recognized by ADOT as having any official status. It does not affect the status of U.S. Route 60 or confer a historical designation or name on U.S. Route 60.


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- 9) No other highways in Arizona have been or are currently named after Jefferson Davis.
- 10) It is the position of ADOT, upon review of the Highway Commission's minutes, that U.S. Route 80 was not granted historic status, in 1961 or at any other time.

As indicated above, it is ADOT's position that since U.S. Route 80 was reclassified, the 1961 Arizona State Highway Commission designation of the "Jefferson Davis National Highway" no longer exists.

Should additional information or clarification be necessary, please contact ADOT Executive Officer Floyd Roehrich at 602.712.7550.

Sincerely,



John S. Halikowski  
Director

Arizona Department of Transportation

C: Mrs. Deanna L. Beaver, Chairwoman, Arizona State Transportation Board  
Members of the State Transportation Board  
Mr. Floyd Roehrich, ADOT Executive Officer