

NO HOPE FOR ALIEN HIGHWAY

By Ed Vogel

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CARSON CITY-Aliens looking for spots to land their space crafts and catch 40 winks won't find them in rural Nevada.

Senate Transportation Chairman Bill O'Donnell, R-Las Vegas vowed Friday to let an Assembly bill creating the "Extraterrestrial Alien Highway" along state Highway 375 die without a hearing.

"There are more important things to do here than talk about alien highways," O'Donnell said. "When I get a call from a legitimate alien, I'll contact a hearing. But I don't have time for frivolity."

O'Donnell said the Legislature costs taxpayers \$50,000 each day it remains in session and the "ET" bill is a waste of money. Lorne Malkiewich, Legislative Counsel Bureau director, said legislators quickly must allocate another \$500,000 because the session likely will not adjourn until the end of June. They already have spent \$8.6 million for legislative operations.

Assembly Bill 533, sponsored by Assemblyman Roy Neighbors, D-Tonopah, would create the "ET" highway along a 36-mile stretch of road between Hiko and Warm Springs. The pavement is just outside the restricted Area 51 base where the military has tested new aircraft. Unidentified flying object buffs also have speculated that aliens whose craft crashed in New Mexico were taken to Area 51

Neighbors called O'Donnell's attitude "sour grapes." He contended the highway designation will promote tourism.

"It has been a fun bill," said Neighbors of his proposal, which 38 members of the 42 member Assembly co-sponsored. "But I've had serious bills too."

He added that several years ago, O'Donnell signed on when the Legislature designated Highway 50 as the "Loneliest Highway in America."

As a Navy pilot, Neighbors said he saw some "weird things," although he won't go so far to admit he believes in aliens.

Ambassador Merlin II, a man who spends his days in the Legislative Building and claims to be an alien, was not disturbed by O'Donnell's reluctance to hear the bill.

"There's a government secret right now that will take care of the situation," said Merlin, whose given name was David Solomon. "It

will be revealed shortly."

O'Donnell said Rachel residents could save taxpayers money by paying for and placing on private property their own alien highway sign. But neighbors said the Legislature must act for any such sign to carry official designation.

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Note: Highway is actually 99 miles long, not 36 miles as given in the article.