



# JERRY PETROWSKI

WISCONSIN STATE SENATOR

Senate Committee on Transportation and Veterans Affairs  
Public Hearing on Senate Bill 411  
September 25, 2019

Vice-Chair Marklein and Committee Members,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify on behalf of Senate Bill 411, which would direct the Department of Transportation to designate the bridge on U.S. Highway 2 across the St. Louis River between the Cities of Superior, Wisconsin and Duluth, Minnesota as the “Richard I. Bong Memorial Bridge.

Although the bridge is commonly known by that name, it was never designated as such in state law, leading to confusion over whether it can be marked as such on state highway maps and other publications.

Major Richard I. Bong is one of America’s finest flying officers is known as our “Ace of Ace’s”. Born in Poplar, Wisconsin, Major Bong fought against the Japanese in the Southwest Pacific during World War II and succeed in shooting down 40 enemy aircraft. Sadly, Major Bong did not live to see the end of the war, as he was killed testing an experimental jet-powered aircraft on August 6<sup>th</sup>, 1945, the same day that the first atomic bomb was dropped on Japan.

There is a memorial plaque near the bridge in Superior already denoting the bridge as the “Richard I. Bong Memorial Bridge”, and the bill specifically prevents any state funds from being expended to put up or maintain any new markers.

Many of us are familiar with the sacrifices Major Bong made to help keep our country safe during the war. This bill will honor his memory by officially recognizing the bridge named for him.

Thank you once again for giving me the opportunity to testify and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.

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