

SS SB 607 -- OUTDOOR ADVERTISING

SPONSOR: Stouffer (Burlison)

COMMITTEE ACTION: Voted "do pass" by the Committee on Transportation by a vote of 12 to 0.

This substitute requires that on the date the Highways and Transportation Commission within the Department of Transportation approves funding for any phase or portion of construction or reconstruction of any street or highway, the rules in effect for outdoor advertising on August 27, 1999, must be reinstated for that section of highway scheduled for construction and there must immediately be a moratorium imposed on the issuance of state sign permits for new sign structures.

Owners of existing signs which meet the requirements for outdoor advertising in effect on August 27, 1999, and the requirements of the federal/state agreement and who voluntarily execute a partial waiver and reset agreement may reset the signs on the same or adjoining property. The reset agreement must be contingent upon obtaining any required local approval to reset the sign structure. Any sign which has been reset must still comply with the August 27, 1999, outdoor advertising regulations after it has been reset.

Owners of existing signs who elect to reset qualifying signs must receive compensation representing the actual cost to reset the existing sign. Signs which have been reset under these provisions must be reconstructed of the same type materials and may not exceed the square footage of the original sign structure.

A sign owner may elect to reset an existing qualifying sign by executing a partial waiver and reset agreement with the commission.

Upon the completion of construction on any section of highway, the moratorium on new permits must be lifted and the rules for outdoor advertising in effect on the date the construction is completed must apply to the section of highway.

Local zoning authorities may prohibit the resetting of qualifying signs which fail to comply with local regulations

All signs must be subject to the biennial inspection fees under Section 226.550, RSMo.

FISCAL NOTE: No impact on state funds in FY 2013, FY 2014, and FY 2015.

PROPONENTS: Supporters say that the bill is good for the state and business. It will move us into this century and allow at least half of the existing signs to be updated or moved. These signs are needed to help Missouri businesses.

Testifying for the bill were Senator Stouffer; Bill May, Missouri Outdoor Advertising Association; and Department of Transportation.

OPPONENTS: Those who oppose the bill say that it destroys a compromise enacted in 2002. There were reasonable provisions established then and this goes too far in removing them. Digital billboards are bad because a report shows evidence that a driver's eyes are distracted from the roads for too long which could cause accidents. If we are going to rebuild these roads and widen them, we need to also redo the landscaping. The bill does not protect scenic areas.

Testifying against the bill was John Regenbogen, Scenic Missouri.