

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**ESSB 5425**

**AS PASSED SENATE, MARCH 16, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Adjusting routes and methodology of scenic and recreational highways.

**SPONSORS:** Senate Committee on Transportation (originally sponsored by Senator Fraser; by request of Department of Transportation)

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5425 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Vognild, Chairman; Loveland, Vice Chairman; Skratek, Vice Chairman; Drew, Oke, Prince, M. Rasmussen, and Winsley.

**Staff:** Jennifer Joly (786-7305)

**Hearing Dates:** February 4, 1993; February 16, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

The Washington State Legislature established the Scenic and Recreational Highways System through the Scenic and Recreational Highways Act of 1967 (RCW 47.39).

The primary consequence of designating a highway as part of the Scenic and Recreational System is that billboards which are visible from any place on the system must be removed.

Another consequence of designation as a scenic and recreational highway is access to federal funding for "transportation enhancement activities" and "byways" through the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991 (ISTEA).

At the time of the system's creation, 1,918 miles, or 27 percent of the Washington State highways were designated as part of the Scenic and Recreational Highway System.

In 1990, the Legislature directed the Department of Transportation (DOT), in cooperation with the State Parks and Recreation Commission, to develop a method for assessing the scenic, recreational and cultural characteristics of Washington State's highways; and, to establish an appropriate threshold for additions of highways to the Scenic and Recreational Highways System.

Under the criteria developed by the WSDOT-led task force, 3,168 miles, or 45 percent of the Washington State highway system, are eligible for inclusion in the system. The criteria used to evaluate the scenery along state highways

include: vividness, intactness, unity, uniqueness, and driveability. With regard to the diversity of scenery within the state, the state was broken into five regions of similar physiographic characteristics for evaluation. The availability of recreational opportunities were also considered.

**SUMMARY:**

Based on the criteria developed by the task force 3,168 miles, or 45 percent of the Washington State highway system, are included in the Scenic and Recreational Highway System. Based on these findings, this bill adds these highways to the system.

Additionally, highways presently on the system, which do not meet the criteria, are removed. However, these highways are still afforded billboard control under the Scenic Vistas Act of 1971.

Besides those additions and deletions recommended by the WSDOT-lead task force, State Route 12 from Olympia to Aberdeen at the junction of Highway 101 is retained as part of the Scenic and Recreational Highway System. Additionally, the Port Angeles to Sequim segment of State Route 101 is added to the system.

Signs are permitted along portions of the Scenic and Recreational Highway System in areas zoned, by the governing county, primarily for commercial and industrial uses, and having development visible to the highway as determined by the Department of Transportation and set forth in the Washington administrative code.

Signs located in commercial or industrial areas that do not have development visible to the highway as determined by the Department of Transportation and were lawfully installed after May 10, 1971 visible to the highway now or hereafter designated by the Legislature as part of the scenic system shall be allowed to be maintained.

Temporary political signs are defined as those signs that do not exceed eight square feet in area, are on private property, and solicit votes for candidates or ballot propositions at a scheduled election. Temporary political signs visible to the primary system and scenic system may be erected or maintained outside city limits or zoned commercial and industrial areas having development visible to the highway as determined by the department prior to September 1 during a campaign for a general election, and must be removed within seven days after the election. When the candidate or proposition will be voted upon in a primary or special election, temporary political signs may not be erected or maintained more than 30 days prior to the election, and must be removed within seven days after the election. If temporary political signs are not removed within seven days after any election, the department is authorized to remove them.

The Department of Transportation shall consider the use of the Scenic and Recreational Highway system by bicyclists and pedestrians in connection with non-motorized routes in the state trail plan and the state bicycle plan. Appropriate signage may be used at intersections of non-motorized and motorized systems to demonstrate access, location and the interconnectivity of various modes of travel for transportation and recreation.

Routes designated as scenic and recreational highways are not eligible for removal from the scenic and recreational system without the consent of the local jurisdiction in which the highway is located.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR:**

Designation of scenic and recreational highways promotes and encourages tourism. Support for designation and/or removal from the Scenic and Recreational Highway System was sought from local communities through the Regional Transportation Planning Organization process.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST:** None

**TESTIFIED:** PRO: Senator Fraser, prime sponsor; Ralph Munro, Secretary of State; Skip Burch, Department of Transportation, Secretary of Program Development; Harriet Buckman, Special Assistant for Timber Impacts, Clallam County