

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5005

As Passed Senate, February 19, 1999

Title: An act relating to highway information signs.

Brief Description: Allowing signing of safer routes to tourist-oriented businesses.

Sponsors: Senators Loveland, Haugen, Winsley and Rasmussen.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Transportation: 1/21/99, 1/26/99 [DP].
Passed Senate, 2/19/99, 44-0.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chair; Gardner, Vice Chair; Goings, Vice Chair; Benton, Costa, Eide, Heavey, Horn, Johnson, Morton, Oke, Patterson, Sheldon, Shin.

Staff: Ashley Probart (786-7319)

Background: State law authorizes the Department of Transportation to erect and maintain signs that provide information to the traveling public. The panels include motorist service information on gas, food, recreation, or lodging that is off of a primary or scenic highway.

For signing purposes, the maximum distance an eligible service may be located on either side of an interchange or intersection is determined by the type of highway. Fully-controlled, limited access highways (such as the interstate system) require gas, food, or lodging services to be within three miles and camping facilities to be within five miles. Partial access control or no access control highways require the same services to be within five miles. However, if there are no eligible services within these specified distances, the distance can be increased up to 15 miles.

Since the enactment of this legislation, existing eligible services have identified alternate routes that are safer or more convenient but exceed the 15-mile signing limit.

Summary of Bill: State law regulating the maximum distance eligible roadway services may be signed from off of the highway is modified. The Department of Transportation is allowed to erect and maintain signs on an alternate route that exceeds the 15-mile limit if it is safer and still provides reasonable and convenient travel to an eligible service.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will enable the signing of safer, alternate routes. There is currently a signed route to an eligible motorist service in Garfield and Columbia counties that is less than 15 miles, but it can be unsafe for recreational vehicles due to the steep grade of the route. There is an alternate route that exceeds the 15-mile limit, but provides more convenient travel. Legislation is necessary to allow the signing of the safer route.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Senator Loveland, prime sponsor (pro).

House Amendment(s): The Department of Transportation is also allowed to erect and maintain signs on a route up to a maximum of 20 miles if it is an eligible service and qualifies as a distressed area under RCW 43.165.