

HOUSE BILL REPORT

HB 1064

As Passed House:

February 4, 2004

Title: An act relating to authorizing the use of signs, banners, or decorations over highways under limited circumstances.

Brief Description: Authorizing the use of signs, banners, or decorations over highways under limited circumstances.

Sponsors: By Representatives Eickmeyer, Buck, Haigh and Blake.

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Transportation: 2/6/03, 2/13/03 [DP].

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/24/03, 96-0.

Floor Activity:

Passed House: 2/4/04, 96-0.

Brief Summary of Bill

- The state's uniform standards on traffic control devices may allow the use of signs, banners, or decorations over highways in unincorporated areas under limited circumstances.
- The Department of Transportation is directed to adopt rules regulating signs, banners or decorations in unincorporated areas.
- The definition of "signs" under the state Scenic Vistas Act is modified to exclude displays promoting local agency sponsored events that do not include advertising.
- An emergency clause is provided so that the legislation takes effect immediately upon becoming law.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Majority Report: Do pass. Signed by 29 members: Representatives Murray, Chair; Rockefeller, Vice Chair; Simpson, Vice Chair; Ericksen, Ranking Minority Member; Jarrett, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Anderson, Armstrong, Bailey, Campbell, Clibborn,

Cooper, Dickerson, Edwards, Flannigan, Hankins, Hatfield, Hudgins, Kristiansen, Lovick, Mielke, Morris, Nixon, Romero, Schindler, Shabro, Sullivan, Wallace, Wood and Woods.

Staff: Jill Satran (786-7315).

Background:

Current state law provides cities and towns the authority to suspend banners or decorations over state highways if the display is suspended at least 20 vertical feet above the highway. This authority is implied in RCW 47.24.020(3) which states that the Department of Transportation has the authority to prohibit the suspension of signs, banners or decorations above the highway up to two feet above the surface of the roadway. Similar authority is not, however, provided to suspend signs, banners or decorations over highways in unincorporated areas, either in state statute or in the state's uniform standards on traffic control devices. Further, the state's Scenic Vistas Act limits the type of signage allowed within view, or within the right of way, of certain state highways.

Summary of Bill:

House Bill 1064 permits the uniform state standard for traffic safety devices to include a standard allowing signs, banners or decorations to be placed over a highway when they are:

- In an unincorporated area;
- Placed at least 20 vertical feet above the highway; and
- Where the sign, banner or decoration does not interfere with or obstruct the view of any traffic control device.

The Department of Transportation must adopt rules regulating the placement of these signs, banners or decorations.

This bill intends to exempt these displays from the state's Scenic Vistas Act by amending the Act's definition of "sign" to exclude a display authorized under the provisions of this bill when the display promotes a local agency-sponsored event and does not include advertising.

An emergency clause is included to allow the provisions of the bill to take effect immediately upon becoming law.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not Requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony For: This bill provides rural communities an economic tool by allowing local organizations to advertise community events.

Testimony Against: None.

Testified: Representative Eickmeyer, prime sponsor.