

# SENATE BILL REPORT

## HB 1064

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As Reported By Senate Committee On:  
Highways & Transportation, March 1, 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:** Representatives Eickmeyer, Buck, Haigh and Blake.

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:** Highways & Transportation: 4/1/03, 4/7/03 [DP]; 2/24/04, 3/1/04 [DPA].

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### SENATE COMMITTEE ON HIGHWAYS & TRANSPORTATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass as amended.

Signed by Senators Horn, Chair; Benton, Vice Chair; Swecker, Vice Chair; Esser, Haugen, Kastama, Mulliken, Murray, Oke, Poulsen and Spanel.

**Staff:** Janice Baumgardt (786-7319)

**Background:** Current law provides that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is required to adopt a uniform state standard for the manufacture, display, erection, and location of all signs, signals, and other traffic devices erected upon state highways.

Additionally, DOT has the authority under jurisdictional statutes governing city streets that are part of a state highway to prohibit the suspension of signs, banners, or decorations, above a highway up to a height of 20 feet above the surface of the roadway. DOT has interpreted this statute to mean that cities and towns have the authority to suspend banners or signs over state highways that are suspended at a height greater than 20 feet above the surface of the roadway. Similar authority is not, however, provided to unincorporated areas. 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 Amended Bill:** DOT may, under the adopted uniform state standards for signage, allow signs, banners, or decorations over a highway when: (1) the highway is located in an unincorporated area; (2) the sign, banner or decoration is at least 20 vertical feet above the highway; and (3) the sign, banner or decoration does not interfere with or obstruct the view of any traffic control device.

DOT must adopt rules regulating signs, banners, or decorations installed pursuant to this provision. Display is automatically approved if the department does not respond within 30 days of application.

The definition of "sign" under the Scenic Vistas Act is amended to exclude signs, banners, or decorations, authorized by DOT in unincorporated areas that promote a local agency sponsored event and do not include advertising.

**Amended Bill Compared to Original Bill:** Additional language is added to make the display approval automatic if the department doesn't respond to the application within 30 days.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

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

**Testimony For:** When rule changes were made rural highways were inadvertently left off; this bill corrects that oversight.

**Testimony Against:** None.

**Testified:** PRO: Representative Eickmeyer.