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## Transportation Committee

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### HB 1408

**Brief Description:** Providing cities and towns with the local options to permit digital outdoor advertising signs.

**Sponsors:** Representatives Moscoso, Kristiansen, Reykdal and Hargrove.

#### Brief Summary of Bill

- Provides cities and towns the option to permit static digital outdoor advertising signs along state highways.
- Requires owners of outdoor digital advertising signs to coordinate with law enforcement and emergency management authorities to display emergency information.
- Allows state agencies to contract with owners and vendors of digital outdoor advertising signs to expand the state's missing person computerized network and emergency messaging system. Such contracts must be voluntary and may not include compensation.
- Requires the Washington State Department of Transportation to adopt rules establishing standards for brightness, size, and change of copy for digital outdoor advertising signs.

**Hearing Date:** 2/5/13

**Staff:** Alyssa Ball (786-7140).

#### Background:

The Scenic Vistas Act (RCW 47.42) regulates signs and billboards along state highways. The Scenic Vistas Act limits signs and billboards on highways advertising off-site commercial activity to installation in industrial or commercial areas only. Permits are required for signs that advertise commercial activity that is not on the premises on which the sign is located; these are referred to as "off-premise" signs.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

Current law prohibits signs which contain flashing, intermittent, or moving light, except those signs that give public service information such as the time, date, temperature, or similar information. Additionally, digital signs are permitted so long as they advertise activity on which the sign is located; these are called "on-premise" signs.

Type 4 signs are signs located within 12 air miles of the advertised activity. Type 5 signs display a message of specific interest to the traveling public. Only information about public places; natural phenomena; historic sites; areas of natural scenic beauty or outdoor recreation; and places for lodging, camping, eating, and vehicle service or repair are deemed to be of interest to the traveling public.

**Summary of Bill:**

The bill provides cities and towns with the local option to permit static digital outdoor advertising signs along state highways. Digital outdoor "off-premise" advertising signs that are located within incorporated cities and towns along state highways are permitted as long as they contain static messages that do not utilize flashing, intermittent, or moving lights. Nothing in the chapter preempts local ordinances and restrictions relating to Type 4 and 5 outdoor advertising signs, nor does it prohibit local municipalities from imposing stricter limitations on these types of signs.

Owners of digital outdoor advertising signs are required to coordinate with law enforcement and emergency management authorities to display emergency information such as amber alerts, missing person alerts, and emergency management information. State agencies may contract with owners and vendors of digital signs to expand the state's missing person network and emergency messaging system. These contracts must be voluntary and may not include compensation.

The Washington State Department of Transportation (department) must adopt rules establishing standards for allowable brightness, size, and change of copy for digital outdoor advertising signs. Digital signs may not be installed until the department adopts such rules.

**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Available.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.