



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Legislation will encourage billboard removal in Oregon's scenic vistas
Senate Bill 689 will provide incentives for billboard owners to relocate signs

SALEM – Legislation encouraging the removal of billboards along Oregon's most picturesque roads found support on the Senate floor this morning. Senate Bill 689 directs the Oregon Department of Transportation to provide incentives for the voluntary removal of billboards from state highways that have been designated as "scenic byways." The legislation also significantly increases penalties for violating state sign laws from \$100 to \$1,000 a day.

"This legislation will improve Oregon's scenic vistas, provide opportunities for Oregon business, and impose tough penalties on those that don't follow the law," said Senator Rick Metsger (D-Welches), chair of Senate Business and Transportation Committee and chief sponsor of the legislation.

Oregon has a unique 'cap and replace' permit system in which the total number of signs along state highways remains capped at 1977 levels. The system allows a sign owner a credit to relocate a sign to another spot in the future. Currently, there are over two hundred billboards along Oregon's scenic byways. Today's legislation gives owners of certain billboards an additional credit to remove a sign from a scenic area, allocating two relocation credits towards a non-scenic byway for each sign removed.

"As a coastal legislator, I feel strongly about the powerful impact of Oregon's vistas," said Senator Joanne Verger (D-District 5), whose district includes hundreds of miles of Highway 101 on the Oregon coast. "People all over the world come to Oregon and explore our coastline, mountains, and deserts. This legislation paves the way for these views to improve over time."

SB 689 is the consensus product of a sign task force established in 2007. The bill will now go to the House for consideration.

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