

News from the Helotes Heritage Association

Dear Readers,

Following is a message concerning roadside billboards:

Please call or write your senators today. See attached list for address and phone numbers. The county option vote could be taken at any moment. Do not delay. Pick up the phone and call those in your area, and ask for their support. We need you now! Thanks again for your help.

SB137, which gives counties the option to stop new billboards on roads outside a city's ETJ, will be heard this week. Today is the magic day and now is the scenic moment to call your senator and ask for their vote.

Following is a fact sheet and a list of Bexar County area senators with a phone number and fax number. Please call them or fax a letter today; emails aren't effective. The billboard industry will be working hard to defeat this bill and they have hundreds of paid employees making telephone calls and writing letters. We must have a strong showing to balance them.

Thanks for your support thus far; we're on the final stretch and can't stop now.

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Fact Sheet:

**Save Rural Texas Views:
VOTE FOR SB137 by Sen. Jane Nelson, LOCAL CONTROL
Texas beauty, economic growth and tourism**

The Problem: Approximately 35,000 off-premise billboards have been erected along the taxpayer-funded public roads in

Texas. Cities are deciding: at least 350 Texas cities have stopped new off-premise billboards. But 550 new permits are issued by TxDOT each year; 80% of those billboards are being erected in rural Texas. City prohibitions combined with urban growth are causing these new off-premise billboards to be erected in rural scenic areas. Counties have no authority to help, and rural Texans don't get to decide what their communities look like.

SB137: A Partial Solution: Local control for counties where problem is growing at an alarming rate. SB137, applicable to counties with populations of 800,000 or more and adjacent counties (Harris, Dallas, Tarrant, Bexar & Travis + adjacent counties), provides local tools to encourage job growth, tourism and scenic beauty.

It's optional: Each county decides whether to designate roads.

It's simple: County commissioners simply adopt an order designating the roads to protect and gives notice to TxDOT. TxDOT remains the enforcement agency so there is no cost or regulatory burden to the county.

Doesn't impact: On-premise signs, government signs, political signs, for sale signs, or existing off-premise billboards. Existing off-premise billboards may be maintained, repaired or reconstructed if not more than 60% destroyed and may be relocated for highway widenings.

It's what Texans want: April 2007 survey of 1000 Texans (Baselice & Associates):

86% said we had too many or the right amount of billboards and *only* 5% said they wanted more (9% had no opinion)
77% said they wanted the Local Control provided by SB137

Bexar County Area Senator Contact information:

Sen Carlos Uresti
Ph (512) 463-0119
Fax (512) 463-1017

Sen Jeff Wentworth
Ph (512) 463-0125

Fax (512) 463-7794

Sen Leticia Van de Putte

Ph (512) 463-0126

Fax (512) 463-2114

Sen Judith Zaffirini

Ph (512) 463-0121

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