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HOUSE BILL NO. 692

Offered January 9, 2008

Prefiled January 8, 2008

A BILL to amend and reenact § 33.1-355 of the Code of Virginia and to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Article 15 of Chapter 1 of Title 33.1 a section numbered 33.1-223.2:18, relating to installation of certain signs in highway rights-of-way by local governing bodies; display of certain information on exit signs on controlled access highways.

Patron—Armstrong

Referred to Committee on Transportation

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 33.1-355 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Article 15 of Chapter 1 of Title 33.1 a section numbered 33.1-223.2:18 as follows:

§ 33.1-223.2:18. Display of local government Internet web addresses on certain official signs.

At such location as may be requested by local governing bodies, the Department shall permit local governing bodies to include on or attach to exit signs on controlled access highways the Internet web address of the locality's official website. Such display shall be of a design and type approved by the Department and shall be produced, installed, and maintained at the expense of the locality requesting it.

§ 33.1-355. Excepted signs, advertisements and advertising structures.

The following signs and advertisements, if securely attached to real property or advertising structures, and the advertising structures, or parts thereof, upon which they are posted or displayed are excepted from all the provisions of this article save those enumerated in §§ 33.1-353, 33.1-356, 33.1-360, subdivisions (2) through (13) of § 33.1-369 and §§ 33.1-370 and 33.1-375:

(1) Advertisements securely attached to a place of business or residence, and not to exceed 10 advertising structures with combined total area, exclusive of the area occupied by the name of the business, owner or lessee, of advertisements and advertising structures not to exceed 500 square feet, erected or maintained, or caused to be erected or maintained, by the owner or lessee of such place of business or residence, within 250 feet of such place of business or residence or located on the real property of such place of business or residence and relating solely to merchandise, services or entertainment sold, produced, manufactured or furnished at such place of business or residence;

(2) Signs erected or maintained, or caused to be erected or maintained, on any farm by the owner or lessee of such farm and relating solely to farm produce, merchandise, services or entertainment sold, produced, manufactured or furnished on such farm;

(3) Signs upon real property posted or displayed by the owner, or by the authority of the owner, stating that the property, upon which the sign is located, or a part of such property, is for sale or rent or stating any data pertaining to such property and its appurtenances, and the name and address of the owner and the agent of such owner;

(4) Official notices or advertisements posted or displayed by or under the direction of any public or court officer in the performance of his official or directed duties, or by trustees under deeds of trust, deeds of assignment or other similar instruments;

(5) Danger or precautionary signs relating to the premises or signs warning of the condition of or dangers of travel on a highway, erected or authorized by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner; or forest fire warning signs erected under authority of the State Forester and signs, notices or symbols erected by the United States government under the direction of the United States Forestry Service;

(6) Notices of any telephone company, telegraph company, railroad, bridges, ferries or other transportation company necessary in the discretion of the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner for the safety of the public or for the direction of the public to such utility or to any place to be reached by it;

(7) Signs, notices or symbols for the information of aviators as to location, direction and landings and conditions affecting safety in aviation erected or authorized by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner;

(8) Signs containing 16 square feet or less and bearing an announcement of any county, town, village or city, or historic place or shrine, situated in this Commonwealth, advertising itself or local industries, meetings, buildings or attractions, provided the same is maintained wholly at public expense, or at the expense of such historic place or shrine;

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59 (9) Signs or notices containing two square feet or less, placed at a junction of two or more roads in
60 the State Highway System denoting only the distance or direction of a church, residence or place of
61 business, provided such signs or notices do not exceed a reasonable number in the discretion of the
62 Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner;

63 (10) Signs or notices erected or maintained upon property giving the name of the owner, lessee or
64 occupant of the premises;

65 (11) Advertisements and advertising structures within the corporate limits of cities and towns, except
66 as specified in § 33.1-353;

67 (12) Historical markers erected by duly constituted and authorized public authorities;

68 (13) Highway markers and signs erected, or caused to be erected, by the Commissioner or the
69 Commonwealth Transportation Board or other authorities in accordance with law;

70 (14) Signs erected upon property warning the public against hunting, fishing or trespassing thereon;

71 (15) Signs erected by Red Cross authorities relating to Red Cross Emergency Stations. And authority
72 is hereby expressly given for the erection and maintenance of such signs upon the right-of-way of all
73 highways in this Commonwealth at such locations as may be approved by the Commonwealth
74 Transportation Commissioner;

75 (16) Signs advertising agricultural products and horticultural products, or either, when such products
76 are produced by the person who erects and maintains the signs; provided, however, that the location and
77 number of such signs shall be in the sole discretion of the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner;

78 (17) Signs advertising only the name, time and place of bona fide agricultural, county, district or
79 state fairs, together with announcements of special events in connection therewith which do not consume
80 more than 50 percent of the display area of such signs, provided the person who posts the signs or
81 causes them to be posted will post a cash bond as may be prescribed by the Commonwealth
82 Transportation Commissioner, adequate to reimburse the Commonwealth for the actual cost of removing
83 such signs as are not removed within 30 days after the last day of the fair so advertised;

84 (18) Signs of eight square feet or less, or one sign structure containing more than one sign of eight
85 square feet or less, which denote only the name of a civic service club or church, location and directions
86 for reaching same, and time of meeting of such organization, provided such signs or notices do not
87 exceed a reasonable number as determined by the Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner;

88 (19) Notwithstanding the provisions of § 33.1-373, signs containing advertisements or notices that
89 have been authorized by a county and that are securely affixed to a public transit passenger shelter that
90 is owned by that county, provided, however, that no advertisement shall be placed within the
91 right-of-way of the federal interstate system, National Highway System, or the federal-aid primary
92 system of highways in violation of federal law. The prohibition in subdivision 8 of § 33.1-369 against
93 placing signs within 15 feet of the nearest edge of the pavement of any highway shall not apply to such
94 signs. The Commonwealth Transportation Commissioner may require the removal of any particular sign
95 located on such a shelter as provided in this subdivision if, in his judgement, such sign constitutes a
96 safety hazard;

97 (20) *Signs erected, maintained, or caused to be erected or maintained by local governing bodies*
98 *either within highway rights-of-way or visible from highway rights-of-way that are used to identify the*
99 *locality and welcome travelers. Such signs may include, but need not necessarily be limited to,*
100 *statements or phrases such as "welcome to _____, "birthplace of _____, or "home of the*
101 *_____." Such signs may also display the Internet web address of the locality's official website.*