

Senate Transportation Committee

Kirsten Koch 271-3266

HB 305, relative to motorist service signs on limited access highways.

Hearing Date: March 16, 2021

Time Opened: 1:30 p.m.

Time Closed: 1:42 p.m.

Members of the Committee Present: Senators Birdsell, Watters, Ricciardi, Ward and Sherman

Members of the Committee Absent : None

Bill Analysis: This bill deletes a limitation on the placement of motorist service signs on limited access highways.

Sponsors:

Rep. Horrigan

Who supports the bill: Rep. Tim Horrigan, Strafford 6; Bill Lambert, NHDOT; Shari King, NHDOT; Henry Veilleux, NH Lodging & Restaurant Association; Kevin Daigle, NH Grocers Association; Robin Vogt.

Who opposes the bill: None.

Who is neutral on the bill: None.

Summary of Testimony Presented:

Senator Watters, District 4

- Senator Watters introduced the bill.
- Senator Watters said this bill extends placements.

Bill Lambert, NHDOT

- Mr. Lambert testified in support of the bill.
- Mr. Lambert referred members to his written testimony on background of the logo program.
- Mr. Lambert said, NH adopted sign logos in 1995. The four categories of logos at the time were gas, food, lodging, and camping. NH originally adopted this signage just for ramps; the cost of a sign on a ramp vs. the cost of a sign on a mainline was a significant consideration. Signs with the attractions category were later introduced in 2013.

- Mr. Lambert said, the NHDOT does not have the resources for the mainline signs. A private company does these signs.
- Mr. Lambert said, concerns have come up about having these blue signs in more rural parts of the state, so the bill was originally passed for only the areas south of Concord. However, this excludes towns such as Plymouth, Tilton, Woodstock which are places with a lot of services that would be interested in having these signs.
- Senator Sherman asked, is this limited to federal highways?
 - Mr. Lambert said, this is limited access to state highways. This would expand to 89 and 93.
- Senator Sherman asked, so it is already on 101 because it is south of Concord. Is this going to allow a significant increase in signage? Or just make it clearer?
 - Mr. Lambert said, there can be no more than 4 signs for each interchange exit. The number of signs is regulated. The program was originally initiated in the 1970s-1980s for gas services. I do not see us having a lot of full interchanges. Maybe the exit in Tilton would gain a few.

Henry Veilleux, NH Lodging & Restaurant Association

- Mr. Veilleux testified in support of the bill and he said the NH Lodging & Restaurant Association supports this bill.
- Mr. Veilleux said he worked with Bill Lambert on the original bill.
- Mr. Veilleux said, right now you can see logos coming down the divided highway south of Concord. It is helpful to see specific restaurants, for example Common Man on the signs. As of now, on signs north of Concord, there is just generic symbol for restaurants, such as a fork and spoon; you cannot see the restaurant name logos on the signs.