

Present law requires the Dept. of Transportation and Development (DOTD) to adopt a manual and specifications for a uniform system of traffic control devices consistent for use upon highways within this state. Such uniform system is required to correlate with and so far as possible conform to the system then current as approved by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration.

Proposed law requires DOTD to adopt a supplement to the manual required by present law, subject to approval by the U.S. Dept. of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration, which shall permit parish governing authorities to request bilingual guide signs on state and federal highways within their boundaries.

Proposed law requires that any such supplement require uniformity for all bilingual guide signs installed on state and federal highways.

Proposed law provides that DOTD shall coordinate with the Council for the Development of French in La. (CODOFIL) in developing the supplement.

Proposed law requires that the supplement shall provide a process by which a parish governing authority may make a request for bilingual guide signs.

Proposed law provides that this process shall, at minimum, require the parish governing authorities to identify the signs it wishes to be bilingual, the non-English language to be used on the bilingual guide signs, and the terms and spelling thereof of any such non-English terms to appear on the bilingual signs. DOTD shall have approval of the non-English terms and the spelling thereof, unless the submitted terms are in La. French. The CODOFIL shall approve terms submitted in La. French or provide alternative La. French terms.

Proposed law provides that DOTD shall bear the cost of the production and installation if a guide sign that a parish governing authority requests to be bilingual is set for replacement or installation in the fiscal year that the request is made. However, the parish governing authority shall bear any increased cost in production or installation, or both, caused by the placement of the bilingual terms on the guide sign.

Proposed law provides that a parish governing authority shall bear the entire cost of the production and installation if a guide sign that the parish governing authority requests to be bilingual is not set for replacement or installation in the fiscal year that the request is made.

(Proposed to amend R.S. 32:235(A); Proposed to add R.S. 25:651(C)(7))

VETO MESSAGE: "House Bill No. 415 requires the Department of Transportation and Development to submit a plan amendment to the US Department of Transportation to allow new and replacement standard traffic signs to be bilingual. As originally filed, the bill restricted bilingual signage to French, a language with which Louisiana has a long and standing cultural history. However, the bill was amended to include any language, which may or may not have a cultural connection to Louisiana.

In lieu of this legislation, I will issue an executive order instructing the Department of Transportation and Development to submit a plan amendment to the US Department of Transportation to allow new and replacement standard traffic signs to be displayed in both English and French.

For this reason, I have vetoed House Bill No. 415 and hereby return it to the House of Representatives."