



THE STOUFFER REPORT

Senator Bill Stouffer
Senate District 21

Capitol Building, Room 332
Jefferson City, MO 65101

A Weekly Column for the Week of:
March 10, 2008

Contact:
Aaron Baker (573) 751-1507

Give Billboards a Fighting Chance

Some folks don't like them. Others have no opinion. When I travel, I use billboards to decide where I am going to stay or eat. In my opinion, if a business can afford a billboard then it is a decent establishment.

Today, technology for billboards has changed. When we rebuild Interstates 70 and 44, they will have to come down and we could lose 75% of billboards along the right-of-ways. Remember, transportation leaders across the state are hopeful our two major interstates will be eight lanes – four for cars and four for trucks. We also have to have a plan for the billboards that are currently in place on those roadways.

Today, most of the billboards along I-70 and I-44 are considered non-conforming. That means they no longer comply with current law. Therefore, when they blow down or are removed, they cannot be rebuilt. Whenever I-70 and I-44 are rebuilt it would end up costing MoDOT \$60 million to purchase billboards on the right-of-ways – and not on concrete.

That is why I am sponsoring [Senate Bill 809](#). This legislation would save taxpayers money. Again, relocating billboards along I-44 and I-70 would cost around \$60 million. If you tore those down, you would have to buy the remaining time on contracts for the renter to the sign company. Add that together, and you wind up spending about \$120 million. My bill would allow billboards to be relocated temporarily in the sections of the road where construction is happening. Once all the work is done, old laws would be in effect again.

Non-conforming billboards could have the digital technology of a new billboard. For instance, the gas prices on signs or flashy neon signs of today could be digital on the new roads. The bill also allows for the billboards to upgrade their signs without extending their life.

Senate Bill 809 would allow for these non-conforming signs to have new technology and be moved during construction of I-70 and I-44. That would put money in MoDOT's pocket for construction and not those who are in the business of outdoor advertising.

There is still a lot of time left in the legislative session to pass this bill. I am hopeful my colleagues will see the need for this to continue on from the Senate into the House.

-MORE-

If you have questions about this or any other matter, you can reach Sen. Stouffer at (573) 751-1507 or bstouffer@senate.mo.gov. Thank you.

-END-

Sen. Stouffer represents Carroll, Chariton, Cooper, Clay, Howard, Lafayette, Macon, Ray, and Saline counties.