

Date of Hearing: April 17, 2023

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Laura Friedman, Chair

AB 1320 (Hoover) – As Amended March 16, 2023

**SUBJECT:** California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices: supplemental destination signs: museums

**SUMMARY:** Requires the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to amend, in the next addition or revision, the California Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) to allow supplemental destination signs for publicly owned and private nonprofit museums that have minimum annual attendance of 50,000 people and that are within five miles from the highway.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Existing law vests Caltrans with full possession and control of all state highways. (Streets and Highways Code (SHC) Section 90)
- 2) Existing law requires Caltrans to adopt rules and regulations prescribing uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices including, but not limited to, stop signs, yield right-of-way signs, speed restriction signs, railroad warning approach signs, street name signs, lines and markings on the roadway, and stock crossing signs. (Vehicle Code Section 21400)
- 3) Existing law requires Caltrans to keep and repair all objects or markers adjacent to a state highway that have been erected to mark registered historical places. (SHC 101.12)
- 4) Existing law requires Caltrans erect generic directional signs, at appropriate locations, on state highway routes, directing motorists to each veterans home of California. (SHC 101.13)

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** According to the California MUTCD, the purpose of traffic control devices, as well as the principles for their use, is to promote highway safety and efficiency by providing for the orderly movement of all road users on streets, highways, bikeways, and private roads open to public travel throughout the nation.

Recreational and cultural area signs guide road users to a general area and then to specific facilities or activities within the area. These signs may be used off the road network, as appropriate. Recreational or cultural interest areas are attractions or traffic generators that are open to the general public. These signs notify the road user for the purpose of play, amusement, or relaxation. Recreational attractions include such facilities as parks, campgrounds, gaming facilities, and ski areas. Examples of cultural attractions include museums, art galleries, and historical buildings or sites.

Traffic control devices or their supports are restricted from bearing any advertising message or any other message that is not related to traffic control, and Caltrans is restricted from providing signs for privately owned, profit making enterprises regardless of their size. Below are examples of recreational and cultural signs included in the most recent MUTCD:



The current criteria for a museum sign provided by Caltrans is if annual attendance to the museum in a Major Metropolitan Area is 1,000,000, 500,000 in an urbanized area, and 200,000 in a rural area. See the table below illustrating the most recent CA MUTCD criteria for supplemental destination signs:

California MUTCD 2014 Edition  
(FHWA's MUTCD 2009 Edition, including Revisions 1 & 2, as amended for use in California)

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**Table 2D-102 (CA). Criteria for Supplemental Destination Signs**

Type of Destination	Specific Criteria	Major Metropolitan Areas	Urbanized Areas	Rural Areas
Post Secondary School, Public or Private	Minimum Enrollment (Single Campus Locations, See Note 5). Maximum Miles from a Freeway ( See Note 6).	1,000 2	1,000 4	1,000 5
Museum, Zoo, Stadium or Sports Arena	Public Owned and Non-Profit. Minimum Annual Attendance. Maximum Miles from Highway (See Note 2).	1,000,000 2	500,000 2	200,000 3

This bill seeks to change the criteria for Caltrans to provide a recreational or cultural sign for public and nonprofit museums.

*Purpose of this bill:* Within the California MUTCD, museums are grouped with zoos, stadiums and sports arenas and require the same attendance threshold as these much larger venues. California museums vary in size and often do not have the ability to attract enough visitors to qualify for a sign under the current criteria. Considering the differing sizes of our museums, this bill seeks to differentiate criteria for museums from stadiums, sports arena, and zoos.

The author of this bill represents the California Aerospace Museum, which is an affiliate of the Smithsonian Institute. Currently, there is no recreational or cultural sign on the roadway to guide road users to the museum.

The California Aerospace Museum was founded in 1982 as the McClellan Aviation Museum, a part of the US Air Force museum system. After McClellan Air Force Base closed in 2001, the community rallied to keep the Museum open. The Museum relocated to a new facility on McClellan Park creating a large exhibit hall, classrooms and a four acre air park in 2007. The name was changed to the Aerospace Museum of California to expand the mission to display commercial and private aircraft as well as aircraft used by all branches of the Armed Forces. The museum includes interactive science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) exhibits and a goal of the museum is to give 30,000 Sacramento kids a STEM experience. The museum includes over 40 aircrafts, World War II artifacts, activities, challenges and learning stations.

There are over 1,000 official museums in California. From fine art museums to air museums and cultural galleries. By providing additional signage to alert drivers to the presence of nearby museums, this bill may result in more attendance to museums that traditionally have less attendance. It should be noted that an enactment of a piece of legislation is not the only way to achieve the goal of creating a designation for museums, as Caltrans regularly facilitates a working group process for amendments to the California MUTCD.

*According to the author,* “Currently, Caltrans administers signage programs allowing various signs to be placed on highways specifying qualified points of interest. This bill allows sign designations for museums to be placed on a highway as long as it’s located within 5 miles and has an annual attendance of at least 50,000 people. While museums are currently a qualified business under the signage program, the criteria for sign placement is not easily met. Museums are grouped with zoos, stadiums and sports arenas which attract a large number of people. Museums come in various sizes and some of our smaller museums do not draw the population numbers required even though they provide a huge public service and are often an important learning tool for our school children and communities. In order to attract more visitors, it is important that the criteria be adjusted to allow for museum signs to be placed on freeways.”

*Prior legislation.* AB 178 (Gaines) Chapter 131, Statutes of 2013 requires Caltrans to allow the placement of business logo signs along State Highway Route 65 within, or at exits leading to, the City of Lincoln.

SB 842 (Knight) Chapter 654, Statutes of 2014 requires Caltrans erect generic directional signs, at appropriate locations, on state highway routes, directing motorists to each veterans home of California.

## **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

### **Support**

None on file

### **Opposition**

None on file

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