

Date of Hearing: June 11, 2018

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

SB 1259 (Nielsen) – As Amended April 11, 2018

**SENATE VOTE:** 36-0

**SUBJECT:** Signage: tourist oriented directional signs

**SUMMARY:** Exempts an American Viticultural Area in Tehama County from the 10-mile distance restriction related to tourist oriented directional signs on state highways.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) Assigns the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) the responsibility of operating and maintaining state highways, including the installation and maintenance of highway signs.
- 2) Creates the tourist oriented directional sign program, enabling Caltrans to erect signage directing “out-of-town” travelers to the state’s tourist attractions.
- 3) Restricts Caltrans from placing tourist oriented directional signs in a number of circumstances, including:
  - a) On freeways, expressways, or congested highways;
  - b) Within city limits or in areas with populations exceeding 50,000;
  - c) If the business is adjacent to and visible from the highway; and,
  - d) If the attraction is more than 10 miles from the intersection at which the sign is erected.
- 4) Federal law authorizes the Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau to define and approve American Viticultural Areas in the U.S.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** According to the Senate Appropriations Committee, pursuant to Senate Rule 28.8, negligible state costs.

**COMMENTS:** Tourist oriented directional signs are highway signs in rural areas which help guide travelers to California’s tourist attractions not immediately visible from the highway. These signs are generic, referring to general types of businesses (e.g. wineries, gift shops, and restaurants) and do not refer to specific businesses by name. The signs are fabricated in conformance with Caltrans regulations by the entity wishing to display the sign and are installed by Caltrans. The cost of installation and maintenance in the first year is relatively inexpensive at \$400, with an ongoing maintenance cost of \$30 per year. All costs are paid by the applicant. Tourist oriented directional signs are distinct from billboards, which are privately erected and may be promotional.

The limitations on the tourist oriented directional signs are intended to limit the clutter and distraction of unnecessary signage on state highways. In addition to state law, the Manual on

Uniform Traffic Control Devices issued by the Federal Highway Administration governs the placement and look of the tourist oriented directional signs.

According to the author, the Manton American Viticultural Area, an up-and-coming Tehama County tourist destination, has businesses just outside of the 10-mile statutory limit for the state's tourist oriented directional signs program. Despite a willingness by interested parties, including both local and state government, to find a path forward, statute ties their hands. By exempting American Viticultural Areas within Tehama County from the statutory limit, the county can discuss the need for tourist signage in good faith with Caltrans without the concerns about mile limits.

### **REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

#### **Support**

Andrew Station LLC  
Appleland  
Dobson Vineyards  
Indian Peak Vineyards  
J&K Organics  
Manton Apple Festival  
Manton Museum  
Manton Realty  
Manton Valley Wine Growers Association  
North Valley Services  
Red Bluff-Tehama County Chamber of Commerce and Visitors Bureau  
Shasta Daisy Vineyards  
Tehama Country Visitor Center  
Tehama County Board of Supervisors  
Tehama County Department of Agriculture  
Wine Institute  
4 private citizens

#### **Opposition**

None on file

**Analysis Prepared by:** Eric Thronson / TRANS. / (916) 319-2093