

Date of Hearing: April 18, 2016

ASSEMBLY COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION

Jim Frazier, Chair

AB 2559 (Frazier) – As Amended April 13, 2016

**SUBJECT:** Visitor centers: guide signs

**SUMMARY:** Provides, notwithstanding existing provisions related to uniform traffic control devices, that the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) may authorize guide signs for any visitor center seeking a sign if the visitor center is located within two miles from the highway intersection.

**EXISTING LAW:**

- 1) At the federal level, requires all states to adopt the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD), or to at least substantially comply with it. The federal MUTCD prescribes standards for signs, signals, markings, and other devices used to guide traffic on streets and highways throughout the country.
- 2) Directs Caltrans, after consultation with local agencies and public hearings, to adopt rules and regulations prescribing uniform standards and specifications for all official traffic control devices, including, but not limited to, stop signs, guide signs, yield right-of-way signs, speed restriction signs, railroad warning approach signs, street name signs, and lines and markings on the roadway. These regulations are set forth in the California MUTCD.
- 3) Provides that only those traffic control devices that conform to the California MUTCD may be placed on a street or highway.

**FISCAL EFFECT:** Unknown

**COMMENTS:** The author introduced AB 2559 to provide directional signs to visitor centers that are not currently eligible for directional signage by virtue of their location being greater than one half of a mile from a freeway.

The purpose of traffic control devices (e.g., signs) 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. Regulations regarding signs are set forth in the MUTCD. In California, development of the California MUTCD is the responsibility of the California Traffic Control Devices Committee (CTCDC). The CTCDC is convened and chaired by Caltrans and the committee's membership includes eight voting members representing the California Highway Patrol, the League of California Cities, the California State Association of Counties, and auto clubs. Meetings of the CTCDC serve as requisite public hearings prior to promulgating rules related to traffic signs, signals, and pavement markings. The California MUTCD includes provisions governing directional signs to tourist centers, including a requirement that, to be eligible for freeway signing, a visitor center must be within one half of a mile from the freeway. Only signs provided for in the MUTCD can be lawfully placed on a public roads.

AB 2559 is necessary because the California MUTCD does not authorize signs to visitor centers that are further than a one half of a mile from the freeway. The author hopes that more flexible

criteria will increase opportunities for visitor centers signs and increase motorists' awareness and accessibility to California's many attractions and destinations. This should, in turn, generate further economic benefits to the state. All other requirements set forth in the MUTCD for the visitor signs would still apply.

*Double referral:* This bill passed out of the Assembly Arts, Entertainment, Sports, Tourism, and Internet Media Committee on April 12, 2016, with a vote of 7–0.

**REGISTERED SUPPORT / OPPOSITION:**

**Support**

None on file

**Opposition**

None on file

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