

3/18/10

Letter to the Editor

Subject: HOUSE BILL 536 and PERMITS – NOT RELIGIOUS MESSAGES

Dear Sirs:

This letter is in response to the letter from James M. Fraser, General Manager of 88.5 WJIE.

He has totally misunderstood the issue with House Bill 536 (HB 536). We, who oppose this bill, are in no way against the messages he mentions concerning Jesus and Eternity, etc. We support and will fight to uphold the law on freedom of speech.

Rather, the issue here is that the structure the message is on requires a permit per Federal Highway Regulations. Kentucky receives federal transportation dollars to build and maintain the Federal Highway System – both interstate and primary roads. To be eligible for these funds, Kentucky has signed not one but two agreements that it will comply with federal highway development standards, including signage. These sign standards are: setback from the right-of-way, spacing between boards, maximum height and width, and compliance with safety codes such as structural, wind-load and electrical standards.

It has been determined that passage of HB 536 would place Kentucky out of compliance with these permit standards and would thus jeopardize over \$40 million dollars in federal highway dollars. This determination was done by no less than the Executive Branch of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.

Is allowing several billboards to go up without permits worth losing \$40 million dollars in Federal highway dollars to our Commonwealth? We don't think so.

If you agree with us, Scenic Kentucky requests that you call your legislator and express your opposition to HB 536. They need to hear from you. Call 1-800-372-7181.

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