

# Industry Tactics to Circumvent Regulation

The billboard industry uses a set of standardized tactics to defeat regulation attempts.

The free-spending billboard lobby has been powerful enough to push the enactment of detrimental legislation over public interest protests by contributing big dollars to political campaigns at local, state and national levels.

## Local Tactics

If the public's voice could be heard at the local level, federal failure to protect the roadside might not be critical. But the billboard industry uses standardized tactics to undermine local billboard control efforts. These include:

- Donating free billboard space for public service announcements. Their calculation: users of free billboard space will not support attempts at billboard regulation. Moreover, the industry uses these examples to undermine the positions of public interest groups who favor billboard reform.
- Donating free billboard space to politicians. In one industry publication, a company noted that it would be difficult for council members to support billboard control when they were using billboards themselves.
- Spending millions of dollars on contributions to local and state officials.
- Exaggerating the importance of billboards to local economies. There is no evidence whatsoever that local economies suffer when communities control billboards. What's more, with fewer than 14,000 employees nationwide, the billboard industry provides little in the way of employment to local residents.
- Threatening communities and citizens with lawsuits -- and actually suing in many cases -- to prevent them from implementing local ordinances. In their unsuccessful fight against Jacksonville's billboard removal, the billboard industry has acknowledged spending over \$1 million in legal fees.