

Coalition News

Newsletter of the Coalition for Scenic Beauty

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COALITION JOINS FIGHT TO HALT BILLBOARD AMENDMENTS

In September, the Coalition for Scenic Beauty teamed up with an impressive array of environmental and design organizations to urge the Senate to reject several amendments in the House-passed highway bill, H.R. 5504, that would have restricted the ability of state and local authorities to remove billboards from public highway and mass transit rights-of-way. In a letter to all senators, the groups warned that the amendments also would interfere with valid existing contracts between state agencies and private lessees, would interject the federal government into the property management affairs of states, and would probably result in a rash of lawsuits.

The other groups signing the letter were: American Institute of Architects, American Planning Association, American Society of Landscape Architects, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The highway bill died in conference, but the Senate did reject all billboard industry-promoted amendments. See related story in Sign Control News.

WILDFLOWER CENTER ESTABLISHED BY LADYBIRD JOHNSON

Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson--the chief force behind the original Highway Beautification Act--has now established a National Wildflower Research Center in Austin, Texas. One of the main purposes of the Center will be to serve as a clearinghouse for information on the use of wildflowers. The Center will assist a variety of interests--including highway departments--with information on how wildflowers can save money and water in landscaping and how they best can be used under different conditions. The Center also has a number of demonstration plots, conducts research on wildflowers, and publishes a newsletter, called Wildflowers.

Ladybird's interest in wildflowers also was largely responsible for a provision in the proposed 1984 federal highway bill that would required that one-quarter of one percent of federal highway landscaping funds be used for the planting of native wildflowers. For more information on the Center, write: The National Wildflower Research Center, 2600 FM 973 North, Austin, TX 78725.

GET OUT YOUR CAMERAS

The Coalition for Scenic Beauty needs your photographs. In particular, we are looking for photos of tree-cutting in front of billboards. We know this practice is occurring over and over again around the country, but we need some visual documentation. Any photos you can donate would be appreciated. The best pictures would be 8 x 10 black and white glossies and 35-mm color slides.

Please note: Not all tree-cutting in front of billboards is illegal. We need to know whether the cutting was on the public right-of-way. There are no controls on tree-cutting on private lands. Also, please try to pinpoint as closely as possible exactly where your photograph was taken.

We can also use photographs of ugly strips of billboards in general. These photos should be "classic" shots demonstrating how billboards pose safety hazards (e.g., blocking the view of traffic at an intersection), ruin urban and rural views and scenery, intrude on residential, historic, and commercial areas, etc. Please send your photos to the Center for Sign Control, 1511 K St., N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005.

SEND US YOUR STORIES

Coalition News and Sign Control News need your help in reporting on current billboard and other sign control efforts across the country. We want stories on new ordinances, lawsuits, tree-cutting in front of billboards, state-level legislation and regulations, and information on the billboard industry.

The newsletters are published bi-monthly. To get your story in the November-December issue, contact the Coalition's Washington office by November 22. Write or call the Coalition for Scenic Beauty, 1511 K St., N.W., Suite 1100, Washington, DC 20005. Phone: (202) 783-8335. (Please note: For membership information, contact the Media, PA, office, address below.)

Coalition News is published by the Coalition for Scenic Beauty, a national, nonprofit organization dedicated to improving and preserving the scenic quality of America's urban and rural environments. To achieve this goal, the Coalition advocates the control of signs and billboards and promotes highway beautification. For membership information, write the Coalition for Scenic Beauty, 44 East Front St., Media, PA 19063 or call (215) 565-9131.