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**OFFICE OF GOVERNOR RONNIE MUSGROVE**  
**INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM**

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**TO:** GOVERNOR  
**FROM:** RILEY  
**SUBJECT:** SB 2403  
**DATE:** 3/28/02  
**CC:** FILE

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**SB 2403**

SB 2403 amends current law to revise size restrictions on billboards:

- the maximum size of any outdoor sign or advertisement erected prior to July 1, 2003, is to be 1,200 square feet.
- the maximum area of any one sign face erected on or after July 1, 2003, is to be 672 square feet, with a maximum height of 14 feet and a maximum length of 48 feet. The height of any sign structure may not exceed 40 feet (NOTE: This maximum height for any structure of 40 feet is the only difference between this year and last year's bill.)
- no new double decker signs may be erected after July 1, 2003, but existing double decker signs may remain

The Senate Highways Committee only changed the effective date of last year's bill. The House Transportation Committee held a hearing on the bill prior to passing it. The following comments have been made regarding SB 2403:

- Rep. Compretta has stated that the smaller signs will enhance the beautification of our highways without hurting businesses' ability to advertise. He has also said that smaller companies, as well as Lamar, will have the equal opportunity to erect signs prior to the July 1, 2003, effective date.
- Rep. Tom Cameron, who spoke on behalf of the bill (his father's company was bought by Lamar Advertising and his wife is a manager with Lamar), said that DeSoto County and approximately 23 cities in Mississippi have banned billboards due to excessive size.
- Marty Elrod of Lamar Advertising stated that Lamar doesn't favor double decker signs. Lamar supports this bill.

- Scott Levanway, lobbyist for a coalition of smaller advertising companies including Coggins Advertising and Hawk Media, stated that Lamar has 95% of the billboard business in MS. The smaller companies fear that Lamar will have a stronger monopoly on the business due to the reduced size limitations on new signs after July 2003, but Lamar's current larger signs will be grandfathered in. (See attached letter from Levanway.)

Smaller companies argued last year that they did not know about the bill because their association's lobbyist was controlled by Lamar. Smaller companies have created an informal association and they did have a lobbyist to represent them in this year's debate. We do not control and cannot change the fact that Lamar has 95% of the business in the state. Basically there has only been one change (the maximum height for any structure of 40 feet) in the bill since last year, so you could be questioned as to your change in position if you sign SB 2403. However, I think you should sign the bill.