AMENDED

May 16, 2012

**S. 105**

Introduced by Senators Verdin, Leventis and L. Martin

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Read the first time March 12, 2012.

**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE 1976 CODE, BY ADDING ARTICLE 8 TO CHAPTER 25, TITLE 57, TO DIRECT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION TO CREATE AND SUPERVISE A STATEWIDE PROGRAM RELATED TO PROVIDING DIRECTIONAL SIGNS ALONG THE STATE’S MAJOR HIGHWAYS AND INTERCHANGES LEADING TO AGRITOURISM ORIENTED FACILITIES ENGAGED IN EDUCATIONAL OR AGRITOURISM ACTIVITIES.

Amend Title To Conform

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

SECTION 1. Chapter 25, Title 57 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Article 8

Agritourism and Tourism Oriented Signage Program

“Section 57‑25‑800. As used in this article:

(1) ‘Agritourism‑oriented facility’ means a type of location where an agritourism activity, as defined in Section 46‑53‑10(1), is carried out by an agritourism professional, as defined in Section 46‑53‑10(2), or another type of agricultural facility recommended by the Department of Agriculture and incorporated into regulations of the Department of Transportation pursuant to Section 57‑25‑830 (A);

(2) ‘Tourism‑oriented facility’ means a type of facility recommended by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and incorporated into regulations of the Department of Transportation pursuant to Section 57‑25‑830 (A);

(3) ‘Conventional highway’ means a highway with at‑grade intersections and without control of access; and

(4) ‘Rural’ means an area outside the limits of an incorporated municipality having a population of 5,000 or more according to the most recent decennial census of the United States Bureau of Census.

Section 57‑25‑810. In an effort to promote and assist South Carolina facilities that have an interest in educating, sharing, and selling their programs and products to the general public, the Department of Transportation is directed to create and supervise a coordinated, self‑funded, statewide program related to providing directional signs along certain of the state’s rural conventional highways and non‑interstate scenic byways leading to tourism and agritourism‑oriented facilities. The statewide program shall be operated according to standards and regulations consistent with the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices authorized to be adopted and promulgated by the Department of Transportation. The standards and regulations may provide for the use of official logos developed by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and the Department of Agriculture in compliance with the federal Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices. The standards and regulation may also provide for cooperative agreements between the department and private interests for the administration of the program and for the use and display of names for tourism and agritourism information signs on the highway right‑of‑way.

Section 57‑25‑820. (A) The Department of Transportation shall be responsible for the erection and maintenance of the official signs giving specific information to the traveling public providing directions to tourism and agritourism‑oriented facilities. All signs must conform to department rules and regulations regarding the size and placement of the signs and be in compliance with all federal and state regulations.

(B) The department of Transportation shall coordinate with the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, as applicable, to allow those departments to promote tourism and agritourism‑oriented facilities participating in this directional signage program.

(C) The criteria for selection of qualified agritourism facilities shall be recommended by the Department of Agriculture and incorporated into regulations of the Department of Transportation pursuant to Section 57‑25‑830(A). The criteria for selection of qualified tourism facilities shall be recommended by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism and incorporated into regulations of the Department of Transportation pursuant to Section 57‑25‑830(A).

(D) The approval of applications for signs for agritourism and tourism oriented facilities must be determined by an oversight committee. The oversight committee shall consist of the following members and shall meet at the call of the chairman semiannually to consider applications for signage:

(1) Secretary of the Department of Transportation, or his designee, serving as chairman;

(2) Director of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, or his designee;

(3) Commissioner of the Department of Agriculture, or his designee;

(4) President of the South Carolina Association of Tourism Regions (SCATR), or his designee, and a member of SCATR appointed by its president;

(5) President of the South Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition, or his designee, and a member of the SCTTC appointed by its president.

(6) President of the Outdoor Advertising Association of South Carolina, or his designee, and a member of the Outdoor Advertising Association appointed by its President.

Section 57‑25‑830. (A) Qualified facilities which elect to participate in the directional signage program must submit an application to the Department of Transportation on a form to be supplied by the department. Eligibility and approval to participate in the signage program must be determined by written criteria to be set forth by the Department of Transportation in regulation.

(B) Participating facilities are responsible for the cost of the signs and their installation and maintenance.”

SECTION 2. The Department of Agriculture and the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism must develop logos to be utilized for the signage authorized by this act. The logos developed may be used by those departments for other promotional purposes associated with tourism and agritourism.

SECTION 3. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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