**A** **BILL**

TO AMEND THE CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, BY ADDING SECTION 57‑5‑200 SO AS TO PROVIDE THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION SHALL INCLUDE “AIKEN” ON ALL EXISTING AND FUTURE SIGNAGE THAT DIRECTS MOTOR VEHICLE TRAFFIC TO THE CITY OF AUGUSTA, GEORGIA ALONG THE EASTBOUND AND WESTBOUND LANES OF TRAFFIC AT EXIT 107 ON INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 26, AND ALONG THE NORTHBOUND AND SOUTHBOUND LANES OF TRAFFIC AT EXIT 16 ON INTERSTATE HIGHWAY 77.

Whereas, in today’s economically competitive world, the members of the General Assembly recognize that effective marketing is a potent ingredient in establishing identity and achieving success; and

Whereas, the members of the General Assembly believe that South Carolina is missing a marketing opportunity to highlight Aiken County as the key metropolitan area in the western portion of our State by failing to include “Aiken” on interstate signage around the Columbia Metropolitan Area. Specifically, all interstate directional signage in the Columbia Metropolitan Area trumpet Augusta, Georgia as the westbound interstate designation, but fail to note Aiken as a tourist or business destination; and

Whereas, Aiken County has the last exits along the western portion of Interstate Highway 20 and should be highlighted in the Columbia Metropolitan Area through signage to notify tourists, business people, and commercial motor vehicle drivers that come to South Carolina’s “Horse County” as the swiftest way to travel to Aiken County. Now, therefore,

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

SECTION 1. Article 1, Chapter 5, Title 57 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

“Section 57‑5‑200. (A) The Department of Transportation shall include “Aiken” on all existing and future signage that directs motor vehicle traffic to the City of Augusta, Georgia along the eastbound and westbound lanes of traffic at Exit 107 on Interstate Highway 26, and along the northbound and southbound lanes of traffic at Exit 16 on Interstate Highway 77.

(B) Public funds shall not be used to implement the provisions contained in this section.”

SECTION 2. This act takes effect upon approval by the Governor.

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