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5**HOUSE BILL NO. 649**

AMENDMENT IN THE NATURE OF A SUBSTITUTE  
(Proposed by the House Committee on Transportation)  
(Patron Prior to Substitute—Delegate Hayes)  
House Amendments in [ ] - February 4, 2026

6 A BILL to amend and reenact § 33.2-1224 of the Code of Virginia, relating to removal of certain signs and  
7 advertisements placed within the limits of highways; agreements with local governing bodies in Planning  
8 District 23; requirements.

9 Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

10 1. That § 33.2-1224 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted as follows:

11 § 33.2-1224. Signs or advertising on rocks, poles, etc., within limits of highway; civil penalty.

12 Any person who in any manner (i) paints, prints, places, puts, or affixes any sign or advertisement upon or  
13 to any rock, stone, tree, fence, stump, pole, mile-board, milestone, danger-sign, guide-sign, guidepost,  
14 highway sign, historical marker, building, or other object lawfully within the limits of any highway or (ii)  
15 erects, paints, prints, places, puts, or affixes any sign or advertisement within the limits of any highway is  
16 subject to a civil penalty of \$100. Each occurrence shall be subject to a separate penalty. All civil penalties  
17 collected under this section shall be paid into the Highway Maintenance and Operating Fund. Signs or  
18 advertisements placed within the limits of the highway are hereby declared a public and private nuisance and  
19 may be forthwith removed, obliterated, or abated by the Commissioner of Highways or his representatives  
20 without notice. The Commissioner of Highways may collect the cost of such removal, obliteration, or  
21 abatement from the person erecting, painting, printing, placing, putting, affixing, or using such sign or  
22 advertisement. When no one is observed erecting, painting, printing, placing, putting, or affixing such sign or  
23 advertisement, the person, firm, or corporation being advertised shall be presumed to have placed the sign or  
24 advertisement and shall be punished accordingly. Such presumption, however, shall be rebuttable by  
25 competent evidence. In addition, the Commissioner of Highways or his representative may seek to enjoin any  
26 recurring violator of this section. The Commissioner of Highways may enter into agreements with any local  
27 governing body authorizing local law-enforcement agencies or other local governmental entities to act as  
28 agents of the Commissioner of Highways for the purpose of (i) enforcing the provisions of this section and  
29 (ii) collecting the penalties and costs provided for in this section. Any such agreement may provide that  
30 penalties and costs collected pursuant to such agreement shall be paid as agreed.

31 For any locality [ located in within ] Planning District 23 [ with a population between 250,000 and  
32 350,000 and that has a tax increment financing district ], any such agreement shall provide that the locality  
33 shall only authorize designated employees of the locality acting in their official capacity to remove any signs  
34 or advertisements that constitute an advertisement under § 24.2-955.1 and shall not authorize volunteers,  
35 contractors, or compensated non-employee individuals to act on behalf of such locality for the removal of any  
36 such signs or advertisements.

37 The provisions of this section shall not apply to signs or outdoor advertising regulated under other  
38 provisions of this chapter.

ENGROSSED

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