

States with Good Billboard Regulation

Several states have strong laws that limit the use of billboards.

Hawaii c.1918 Billboard Ban

A women's group called the "Outdoor Circle" were interested in preserving the scenic beauty of the islands and were disturbed by billboards. In 1913 they organized a boycott of products advertised on billboards, proceeded to buy out the last billboard company and took down all the billboards. State law has prohibited billboards ever since.

Alaska 1959 Billboard Ban

Alaska became a state in 1959 and had been billboard-free as a territory. Alaskans proud of the grand beauty of their state prevailed to confirm the billboard ban in the first legislative session.

Federal Gov. 1965 Highway Beautification Act

In 1964, first lady Ladybird Johnson led a vigorous campaign to enact tough federal billboard controls. By the time it was enacted in 1965, it was greatly weakened by a massive lobbying effort by the outdoor advertising industry such that many observers consider it a benefit to the billboard operators.

Vermont 1968 Billboard Ban

A legislative council found that tourists provided a very large source of income to the state and that billboards were not effective in providing information to tourists. In 1968, the legislature enacted billboard prohibition and authorized a network of travel information centers. The last billboard was taken down in 1974.

Oregon 1975 No New Billboards (Billboard "Cap")

In 1975 Oregon instituted a statewide "cap" on the number of billboards, freezing the number of billboards at how many existed at the time. No new billboard permits are issued. The program was challenged by legal action against the state in 2004, but a new state law two years later reinstated it. There are 1825 valid sign permits on record and 625 relocation credits as of June 2019.

Maine 1977 Billboard Ban

Maine enacted its Traveler Information Services Act which is patterned after Vermont's law in 1977. The last billboards were taken down in 1984.

Scenic Am. 1978 Scenic America Founded

Formed in 1978 as the National Coalition to Preserve Scenic Beauty, the organization was

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incorporated in 1982 and was subsequently renamed Scenic America. Headquartered in Washington DC, the organization advocates for scenic beauty on the federal level.

Rhode Island 1998 No New Billboards

No permits are issued for construction of new billboards. Requests to relocate signs or to convert them to digital messages are considered case by case.

Michigan 2007 No New Billboards

No new billboard can go up unless an existing one is taken down. The number of billboards in the state remains “capped” at the number existing at the end of 2007 which is estimated at approx. 16,000.