



August 21, 2023

SUMMARY OF BILL: Requires the Department of Transportation (TDOT) to use the department’s existing permanent electronic overhead informational displays on the interstate system to provide periodic messages which encourage the safe storage of firearms. Requires that such messages be displayed during the months of November 2023, February 2024, and May 2024. Authorizes TDOT to develop guidelines, in consultation with the Department of Safety (DOS), for the content of a message to be displayed on such displays.

FISCAL IMPACT:

Other Fiscal Impact – The use of electronic highway signs in the manner required by this legislation may not be acceptable by the Federal Highway Administration. If found unacceptable by the Administration, this legislation could result in a loss in federal highway funding. The amount and timing of any such loss in federal highway funding cannot be determined with reasonable certainty.

Assumptions:

- Based on information provided by the TDOT and the Federal Highway Administration’s (FHWA) Official Ruling No. 2(09) - 174 (I) – “Uses of and Nonstandard Syntax on Changeable Message Signs,” dated January 4, 2021, the interpretation of the FHWA is that changeable message signs are not intended for promotional purposes or messages that are unrelated to traffic control, and specifically “public awareness campaigns unrelated to traffic operation or safety.”
- Based on information provided by the TDOT, the local FHWA office indicates it will permit some messages not in keeping with this ruling, as long as such use is limited and the message has a justifiable use on the signs of the roadway.
- Use of changeable signs in the manner required by this legislation could jeopardize federal highway funds. The amount and timing of any such loss cannot be determined with reasonable certainty.
- Tennessee receives approximately \$67,000,000 annually in federal highway funds.
- The amount and timing of any such loss cannot be determined with reasonable certainty.

CERTIFICATION:

The information contained herein is true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Krista Lee Carsner". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Krista Lee Carsner, Executive Director

/jb