

April 12, 2001

TO THE MISSISSIPPI STATE SENATE:

GOVERNOR'S VETO MESSAGE FOR SENATE BILL 2929

I am returning Senate Bill No. 2929: "AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 49-23-9, MISSISSIPPI CODE OF 1972, TO REVISE THE SIZE RESTRICTIONS PLACED ON CERTAIN SIGNS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES" without my approval, and assign the following reasons for my veto:

Senate Bill Number 2929 is not in the best interest of the outdoor advertising industry, small businesses or the communities of this state. The bill limits in business areas the size of outdoor signage erected after January 1, 2002. We all support efforts to beautify our state and its communities and placing sensible limitations on oversized outdoor signs is a worthy goal.

However, this bill favors those few companies that currently own large outdoor signs and that are prepared to build more such large signs prior to January 1, 2002. The short term effect will be a glut of vacancies on large signs and the long term effect will be to grandfather these large signs, leaving them in place permanently. Additionally, a competitive advantage will be conferred by this bill on a few large companies to the detriment of the outdoor sign industry. A consequence will be increased advertising rates for small businesses.

While the bill succeeds in part by reducing the size of signage built after January 1, 2002, there should be provision for the gradual removal of all oversized signs. Smaller signs would enhance the beauty of our communities without compromising the ability of business to advertise. Companies that have invested in the larger signage should be allowed a reasonable time to recover their investments. Further study would suggest how this and other worthy goals of this legislation are best accomplished.

I urge you to sustain the veto and to thoughtfully reconsider Senate Bill Number 2929.

Respectfully submitted,

RONNIE MUSGROVE
GOVERNOR