

HB 996 -- ROUTE 66

SPONSOR: Black

Currently, the Department of Transportation may not use state money for Route 66 signs. This bill repeals that prohibition and creates the "Route 66 Signage Maintenance and Enhancement Act of Missouri".

The bill establishes the Route 66 Maintenance and Enhancement Program within the Department to maintain and repair existing Route 66 supplemental signage across the state. The program may be expanded to include enhancement of the signage, including beyond right-of-ways to include county and city roads. Signs must highlight historical roadside features and comply with certain department standards.

No later than January 31, 2026, the Department, in coordination with the Missouri Route 66 Centennial Commission, must establish guidelines for supplemental signage design and collaborate with counties and municipalities to implement the installation and maintenance of the signage. The replacement of existing signage and installation of new signage must be completed by May 30, 2026. The program must implement theft prevention measures for the signage.

The Department must seek guidance from the Route 66 Association of Missouri with respect to historical context and expertise on signage placement and seek assistance from the Association on public outreach and education campaigns.

Beginning January 1, 2030, and every five years thereafter, the Department must conduct a comprehensive review of Route 66 supplemental signage costs and submit an annual report to the General Assembly beginning January 1, 2031, outlining proposed budget adjustments based on inflation, technological advancements, and program expansion needs. The Department may establish a program to provide matching grants for local governments and organizations to address specific signage needs or enhancements within their jurisdictions.

The bill also specifies that the Missouri Route 66 Centennial Commission may use its funds for the signage program. Currently, the Commission must submit its final report by June 30, 2027. This bill extends the date to June 30, 2030.