

HOUSE BILL 89

By Lundberg

AN ACT relative to certain signs indicating the jurisdictional limits of Bristol, Tennessee.

WHEREAS, Southern Appalachian settlers in the 1700's who lived in northeast Tennessee brought with them the music of their native Scottish Highlands in the form of old-world ballads and songs; and

WHEREAS, Civil War brought railroads to the area, opening it to influences by touring vaudeville artists, minstrel and medicine show performers, and railroad workers whose work songs reflected their African heritage; and

WHEREAS, persons in northeast Tennessee were exposed to now familiar musical instruments, including the banjo, guitar, autoharp, and dulcimer; and

WHEREAS, this combination of peoples, instruments, and stories combined to generate singular rural mountain music; and

WHEREAS, in the late 1920's Ralph Peer worked to develop and record this special music, using Bristol as his base of operations; and

WHEREAS, Peer's recordings became known as the "Bristol Sessions", marking the birth of country music; and

WHEREAS, the influence of the Bristol Sessions can be heard throughout the range of country music from the bluegrass of Bill Monroe to the guitar-playing of Roy Acuff and Chet Atkins, and the songs of Ernest Tubb, Merle Haggard and Dolly Parton; and

WHEREAS, it is fitting to modify the existing language on signage designating the boundaries of Bristol to give greater recognition to the birthplace of country music; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding the provisions of Tennessee Code Annotated, Section 54-5-108, to the contrary, the department of transportation shall modify the existing signage at each point where an interstate, federal or state highway crosses the boundary of Bristol, Tennessee, so that each such sign includes the language:

Bristol--The Birthplace of Country Music

SECTION 2. The modification of such signs shall be within the guidelines prescribed by the Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices.

SECTION 3. This act shall become operative only if the federal highway administrator advises the commissioner of transportation in writing that the provisions of this act shall not render Tennessee in violation of federal laws and regulations and subject to penalties prescribed therein.

SECTION 4. This act shall become operative only if the cost of the modification and installation of such signs is paid to the department of transportation from non-state funds within one (1) year of the effective date of this act. Such payment shall be made prior to any expenditure by the state for the modification of such signs. The department shall return any unused portion of the estimated cost to the person or entity paying for such work within thirty (30) days of the modification. If the actual cost exceeds the estimated cost, an amount equal to the difference in such costs shall be remitted to the department in non-state funds within thirty (30) days of the sponsoring person or entity receiving an itemized invoice of the actual cost from the department.

SECTION 5. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.