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Sent: Friday, September 21, 2007 12:45 PM

To: David.Simpson@sanantonio.gov; Granda, Thomas

Cc: O'Hara, Catherine <FHWA>; Ted.Murphree@sanantonio.gov;
Roderick.Sanchez@sanantonio.gov; Raymond.Martinez@sanantonio.gov; Bayer, Marsha; Black,
Robert <FHWA>; Hecox, Doug <FHWA>

Subject: RE: Funding for proposed Digital Billboard study.

David - Got your voice message as well... A really sticky subject, indeed... Lots of interest from all sides - scenics and industry both very interested...

We are currently formulating a plan of attack on the driver distraction effects of changing messages on signs with the Safety, Human Factors and other shops to try and get the best results we can from our very limited research money. We have heard that objective research, particularly in the lab, can cost many times what we now have available. Our goal is to try and pinpoint certain key concepts/factors, and try to get others (such as State DOTs) to chip in under the STEP research program to expand our basic premises to improve the end result. We are hoping to get underway soon (e.g. by October) but in the meantime are looking at some possible policy memos to try and at least partially respond to the many demands we are getting, and the heat that States are feeling from many sources. There is huge money involved here, so the interests are getting pretty strident...as you know.

While the results and final report may take a couple of years, we will definitely be reaching out to do some form of interim direction to our Divisions and the States. At this point we are evaluating how much we can do informally versus a need for a major (and potentially lengthy) public outreach process. While the latter may be more comprehensive, we also realize that the pressure on States and local governments in this area is immediate and direct... Please touch base with Marsha Bayer in our Texas Division Office (512-536-5930) who is also very interested in our further actions.

Janis