

June 19, 2002

Tulalip Tribes Planning Commission  
Tulalip Community Development Department  
6700 Totem Beach Road  
Marysville, WA 98271

Dear Tulalip Tribes Planning Commission:

Conditional use permit application CU2002-01 is proposing to install a "115 foot tall freestanding pylon sign with a 30 x 40 foot color video display screen" west of Interstate 5 at the entrance to the new casino. The Washington State Department of Transportation is concerned with the safety of the Interstate 5 motorists as a result of the new sign. There has been a significant increase in collisions near a similar sign along I-5 near the King/Pierce County line. Washington State Department of Transportation recommends against usage of a moving picture type sign for this reason. In fact, the Scenic Vista Act (RCW 47.42 and WAC 468-66) limits the use of video displays to on advertising only on-premise activities. The Scenic Vista Act also limits the types of movements, flashing and scrolling that can take place on electronic signs. We would like to see a traditional, static billboard sign instead of a video sign.

The video sign was installed in 1997 on west side of Interstate 5 at the Pierce/King County line. Collision data was evaluated at a section of the northbound Interstate 5 where the sign is visible and section just north of the sign where the sign was no longer visible. The number of collisions was almost equal for the two sections of the Interstate before the sign was installed during the years 1995 and 1996. The number of collisions almost doubled for the section of the Interstate 5 where the sign is visible and after the sign became operational. The collision rate is higher by 360% from the section of the Interstate 5 where the sign is visible compared with a section just north where the sign is no longer visible during the years 1999 and 2000. While this is preliminary research on the traffic safety effects of the video sign, we will continue to monitor video signs. If a conclusive link is made between the video signs and traffic collisions we will inform video sign owners and operators about the serious traffic safety problems their signs are creating. Below is the summary of the accident data:

	Sign visible MP 139.08 -139,40	Sign not visible MP 139.50 - 139.82
Prior to sign operation 1995-1996	12	10
Sign operational 1999-2000	22	6

Washington State Department of Transportation recommends against the installation of the video sign because of the mounting evidence that such signs distracts motorists from their driving tasks and increases the number of collisions. I request that the Tulalip Tribes Planning Commission consider the use of a static sign to minimize the impact to the driving public. Thank you for this opportunity to provide comments for the proposed sign. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

David McCormick, PE  
Region Traffic Engineer  
Washington State Department of Transportation  
(206) 440-4487