



JOHN SPIROS

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Assembly Bill 703

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Testimony from Rep. Spiros

Good afternoon and thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Assembly Committee on Transportation for allowing me to have the opportunity to talk to you today regarding Assembly Bill 703, which deals with the planting of trees and shrubs on the side of certain highways.

Under current law, any person who owns land adjoining a state highway may plant trees along and 10 feet into the right of way of the highway, as long as they have proper approval from the public authority maintaining the highway. However, this does not apply to individuals who have property owned by the town in between their property and the highway.

This bill specifically aims to help those individuals who own property close enough to a state highway to be affected by the noise, but have property owned by the town in between the highway and their property. An access road would be an example of this. Since they don't own the land, they cannot seek the approval necessary to have trees planted, and the town is currently not allowed to seek approval on the individual's behalf.

This bill would give local governments the flexibility to assist their landowners and, on behalf of the landowner, seek approval from the public authority maintaining the highway to have trees planted. This gives the landowner the ability to have a barrier between their property and the noise from the highway.

Thank you again for allowing me the opportunity to testify in support of this bill, and I would welcome any questions.