



**PRESS RELEASE For Immediate Release**

**TO DC Council:  
Narrow Scope of Nationals Park Billboard Legislation  
Ditch Digi Media Reprieve Legislation and Executive Orders**

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On Tuesday, December 20, 2016 the DC City Council is scheduled to vote on B21-919 **Nationals Park and Ballpark District Designated Entertainment Area (DEA) Signage Regulations Amendment Act of 2016** to authorize five billboards at Nationals Park.

But the bill goes much farther, creating another new billboard area – dubbed “Ballpark District Designated Entertainment Area ” -- on the city block north of the stadium grounds (§N101.20(c)). The bill imposes no limitations of size, numbers or locations for these signs thus opening the area to a tsunami of billboard blight.

“The Ballpark DEA was inserted into the Nationals Park bill at the request of two developers without any public hearing or opportunity for comment. The area is neither a ballpark nor an entertainment venue, and not intended or expected to become either. Billboards in this mixed-use residential and office area offer no benefits whatsoever for the Nats and massive light pollution for residents, workers and hotel guests. Any new DEA should be subject to its own hearing,” said Nancy MacWood, Chair of the Committee of 100 on the Federal City.

The bill would have very damaging consequences for the city by allowing signs up to 1200 square feet (30 x 40 feet, or 52 x 23 feet) in size spaced only 2 ft. apart in any DEA in DC. “These provisions defy the character of our city. The Council should not pass legislation this sloppy and thoughtless,” said MacWood.

On another billboard related matter, the “**Signs Appendix Regulation Emergency Declaration Resolution and Amendment Act**” sponsored by CM Jack Evans which would have validated digital billboards illegally erected by Digi Media, was before the Council December 6 but withdrawn. However, legislation or executive action that would accomplish the same ends, may be under consideration.

“We again urge Council and the Mayor to oppose these outrageous efforts to rescue Digi Media and its unpermitted exterior billboards, thus permanently inflicting massive light-polluting ad-spewing machines on District streetscapes. Digi Media -- the digital billboard company now under preliminary injunction by the Superior Court -- knew exactly what risks it was running in coming into the District, misrepresenting the nature of its permit applications by installing brackets, and proceeding without permits for the signs, apparently in the expectation that some DCRA inspector would acquiesce in its spurious interpretation of the regulations. It was a classic billboard industry tactic: ride into a town, confront us with a *fait accompli*, and force us to acquiesce by the threat of litigation costs. Fortunately, it misjudged DCRA and our Attorney General. To rescue Digi Media would be to send a signal to the billboard industry that DC can be had, because the Council and Mayor will intervene when our law enforcement officials try to do their duty,” said MacWood.

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