

September 13, 2007



STATE FARM  
FARMERS  
21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY  
SAFECO  
PROGRESSIVE  
NAMIC

The Honorable Arnold Schwarzenegger  
Governor, State of California  
State Capitol, First Floor  
Sacramento, CA 95814

### Request for Signature on SB 33

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

The Personal Insurance Federation of California (PIFC), representing insurers who write over 50% of all personal lines insurance sold in California, including State Farm, Farmers, Safeco, 21<sup>st</sup> Century, Progressive, and NAMIC, **supports Senate Bill 33**, authored by Senator Simitian.

SB 33 would prohibit a person under 18 years of age from driving while using a cell phone or other mobile service device.

PIFC and its member companies have a long history of supporting legislation that serves to prevent injuries and enhance public safety. In 1997, State Farm collaborated with the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia to form the Young Driver Research Initiative. This alliance conducted the First National Young Driver Survey to learn about students' awareness and experiences surrounding teen driving. One of the significant results of the survey revealed that 9 out of 10 respondents reported it was common to see teenagers talking on a cell phone while driving. The survey confirmed that distractions are a major cause of concern with inexperienced drivers.

Motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of death among 16 to 20 year olds, accounting for 44% of teen deaths in the United States, with approximately 5,500 teenage drivers or passengers dying each year. Despite the fact that young drivers represent only 6.6% of the nation's licensed drivers, they are involved in 14.8% of fatal crashes.

The California Highway Patrol has recently collected data that shows that cell phone use is the number one identified source of distracted driver related accidents in the state. A study conducted by Ford Motor Company revealed that teenage drivers are four times more distracted than adult drivers by cell phone use.

Studies like these have led the National Transportation Safety Board to urge all states to enact legislation to prohibit inexperienced drivers from using cell phones and other mobile service devices (including pagers and two-way messaging devices) while driving. Currently, fourteen states and the District of Columbia have laws restricting the use of wireless communication devices by new and inexperienced drivers.

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SB 33 is an important measure that will help to minimize driving distractions among teenagers and ensure safer driving conditions for the public.

For the above reasons, **PIFC supports SB 33 and respectfully requests your signature on this bill.** If you have any questions, please contact Ermelinda Ruiz at (916) 442-6646.

Sincerely,

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Rex D. Frazier, President

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Ermelinda Ruiz, Legislative Advocate

4. SB33-Gov-9-07

cc: The Honorable Joe Simitian, Author  
Susan P. Kennedy, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor  
Mike Prosio, Chief Deputy Legislative Secretary, Office of Governor Schwarzenegger  
Cynthia Bryant, Director, Office of Planning and Research  
Kathleen Webb, Office of the Insurance Advisor