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MEMORANDUM

Date: April 5, 2007

To: The Honorable Tom Torlakson, Chair
Members, Senate Appropriations Committee

From: Rex D. Frazier, President
Michael A. Gunning, Vice President
Michael A. Paiva, Senior Legislative Advocate
Ermelinda Ruiz, Legislative Advocate

Re: SB 33 (Simitian): Vehicles: wireless telephones and mobile service devices -
As Amended March 19, 2007
Senate Appropriations Committee Hearing: April 16, 2007
PIFC Position: Support

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, 21st Century, Progressive, and NAMIC, **supports Senate Bill 33** authored by Senator Simitian.

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 (Simitian)**. If you have any questions, please contact Ermelinda Ruiz at (916) 442-6646.

cc: Senator Simitian, Author
Maureen Ortiz, Senate Appropriations Committee
Ed Morley, Senate Republican Caucus
Mike Proso, Chief Deputy, Legislative Affairs Secretary for the Governor
Kathleen Webb, Office of the Insurance Advisor
Senate Floor Analyses

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