



Personal Insurance Federation of California

California's Personal Lines Trade Association

REPRESENTING THE LEADING AUTOMOBILE AND HOMEOWNERS INSURERS
State Farm • Farmers • 21st Century Insurance Group • SAFECO • Progressive

MEMORANDUM

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Date: January 12, 2004

To: The Honorable John Dutra, Chair,
Members, Assembly Transportation Committee

From: Dan C. Dunmoyer, President,
G. Diane Colborn, Vice President of Legislative and Regulatory Affairs
Michael A. Gunning, Senior Legislative Advocate
Dan Chick, Senior Legislative Advocate

Re: AB 1511 (Benoit): Vehicle: Unlawful Activities As Amended January 5, 2004
Assembly Transportation Committee Hearing: January 12, 2004
PIFC Position: Support

The Personal Insurance Federation of California, representing insurers who write nearly 35% of the personal lines insurance policies in California, including State Farm, Farmers, SAFECO, 21st Century Insurance Group, and Progressive Insurance Company, **supports AB 1511** by Assemblyman Benoit. This bill would prohibit a driver from engaging in non-driving activity that interferes with the safe operation of a vehicle.

PIFC and its member companies have a long history of support for sound public safety measures that serve to reduce injuries and enhance public safety. AB 1511 is such a measure. We believe that it will help to save lives, reduce serious injuries, and diminish other associated human and economic costs affiliated with unsafe driving.

Based on the California Highway Patrol's November 2002 report, "*Driver Distractions and Inattention Data Summary*", there are a number of distractions listed that can lead to accidents. Among the listed distractions were cell phones, children, electronic equipment, animals, radio/CDs, personal hygiene, smoking, reading, eating, and other factors. The CHP study concluded that driver distraction is the issue, not any particular activity. We believe that AB 1511 addresses all the factors listed by the CHP and is the best solution to the problem of driver distractions.

As further evidence of the need for this bill, the AAA Foundation Study in June of 2003 states that the results of the "...field data study have demonstrated that many driver distractions are neither new nor technological in nature. Rather, they are aspects of everyday driving that people are likely to seldom think about. A challenge for the highway safety community is to develop effective strategies for modifying people's driving behavior, so that they do not engage in these potentially dangerous activities at inappropriate times while driving."

For all these reasons, **PIFC supports AB 1511** and urges an "aye" vote on the bill when it is heard in committee. Thank you for your consideration of our views. If you have any questions regarding PIFC position, please do not hesitate to contact Michael A. Gunning at (916) 442-6646.

cc: Honorable John Benoit, Author
Richard Costigan, Legislative Secretary, Governor's Office
Joseph Furtado, Assembly Transportation Committee
Cory Salzillo, Assembly Republican Caucus