



CITY OF
PORTLAND, OREGON

Charlie Hales, Mayor
Amanda Fritz, Commissioner
Nick Fish, Commissioner
Dan Saltzman, Commissioner
Steve Novick, Commissioner

April 29, 2015

Representative Caddy McKeown, Chair
House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Legislature
900 Court St. NE, Hearing Room E
Salem, OR 97301

Dear Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee:

We write in strong opposition to SB 167, which allows taxicab drivers to use hand-held cellphones while driving and carrying passengers.

Currently, Oregon law bans drivers from using hand-held cell phones while behind the wheel, with few limited exceptions. Any activity that diverts a person's attention away from the primary task of driving is dangerous. Driving while using a hand-held cellphone is distracting and inherently risky behavior. A Virginia Tech Transportation Institute study revealed that the act of physically dialing a phone while driving increases the risk of a crash as much as six times.

SB 167 increases the number of distracted drivers on our roadways by granting taxicab drivers an exemption from the cellphone ban. With hands-free technology readily available, this exemption is wholly unnecessary. The Legislature should not grant this exemption for taxicab drivers.

We urge your opposition to SB 167. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Charlie Hales
Mayor

Amanda Fritz
Commissioner

Nick Fish
Commissioner

Dan Saltzman
Commissioner

Steve Novick
Commissioner