

House Committee On Judiciary members,

Regarding HB 2597 - Relating to the offense of operating a motor vehicle while using a mobile communication device.

Please retain the Amateur Radio Exemptions currently in law:

"(h) Holds a valid amateur radio operator license issued or any other license issued by the Federal Communications Commission and is operating an amateur radio."

Facts of note are:

Amateur Radio Operators are licensed by the Federal Communications Commission. There are 18,000 FCC licensed Amateurs in Oregon.

Amateurs play an important role in providing communications during emergencies, disasters, search and rescue operations and large public events such as the annual Hood to Coast Run and Cycle Oregon. The events depend on mobile radio ham capabilities. Many governmental and non-governmental organization also depend on mobile radio ham communications.

The use of a ham radio while driving is very different than using a hand-held cell phone; most of the time it is just listening to the radio. Microphone use is typically very brief.

In a letter dated August, 2009, the National Traffic Safety Council commented: " We are not aware of evidence that using amateur radios while driving has significant crash risks. We also have no evidence that using two-way radios while driving poses significant crash risks. Until such time as compelling, peer-reviewed scientific research is presented that denotes significant risks associated with the use of amateur radios, two-way radios or other communication devices, the NSC does not support legislative bans or prohibition on their use"

Thank you for your assistance with this matter.

-Christopher Rumbaugh / K6FIB  
Salem, Oregon