

I understand this House bill has been passed to the Oregon Senate Judiciary Committee for work and action.

I am a member of the Lincoln County Emergency Services auxiliary communications network. I believe I fully understand the nuances and the issues in this important topic. While retired, I worked in the electronics industry for 42 plus years, including with communication products and services.

I'd like to make a few points.

Distracted driving laws that exist in other states, including the State of Washington, as I understand it, currently exempt amateur radio mobile communications for a number of very good reasons, many which will be outlined in emails, letters, testimony and other forms of communication which I suspect you and others in the Senate will receive.

Amateur radio mobile operations differ distinctly from the operational use of cell phones or other electronic devices which demand (require) much of their operation to be done in a 'look down or eyes down' mode. Amateur radio mobile operates via 2 way radios and typically employ a microphone with a transmit button or may operate by simple voice control referred to as VOX. This does NOT require look down or eyes down operation. They are same type of operations used daily by ambulances, fire equipment, police vehicles and other emergency responders. As you are probably well aware, amateur radio operators, fixed and mobile, are a powerful and necessary adjunct to the aforementioned emergency services and play a significant role when minor and major emergency need events occur . I do have such a mobile radio mounted in my vehicle. I have also read a lot of the material that has been published on distracted driving, following the issue closely over the years that the topic of distracted driving has drawn attention. I am unaware of any accident that has ever been caused, in any state, because of the use of the aforementioned radios using hand microphones or VOX

Be assured that amateur radio operators, as a group, are as concerned with distracted driving as anyone, perhaps more so because of the general lack of knowledge by the public about amateur radio. It is not just the typically thought of cellphones and electronic game devices that require eyes off the road for their operation. It extends to the new 'information panels which are in-dash mounted' in the newer vehicles. This device is where a significant amount of the information about a vehicle is presented, whether it be operating conditions, traffic information or the now typical driving direction aid.

Something to consider during your work on this topic is that perhaps someone who is ticketed for distracted driving because of using a 'look or eyes down' cell phone or similar 'eyes or look down' device should also be required to retake and pass the Oregon Driver's test, besides being subject to the citation, fine and possible loss of license. In fact, this could apply to other driving infractions as well.

In any case, while you consider what you might think best serve to solve the problem of distracted driving, if you decide to move forward with a proposed law, I am asking for your support of an exemption for amateur radio and all emergency services vehicles similarly equipped with 2-way mobile radio devices which operate by use of a standard hand microphone or VOX.

This is an important bill. It requires the closest of scrutiny to ensure, if passed into law, that it does what it aims to do, deal narrowly but effectively with distracted driving, particularly because of the increasing use of electronic devices requiring 'look down or eyes down' operation.

I urge each of you to keep your focus on the problem you are being asked to solve.

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"You do not need a parachute to skydive, you only need a parachute to skydive twice."