



Oregon

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DATE: February 21, 2018

TO: Senate Committee on Judiciary

FROM: Victor Hoffer, Chair
Oregon Transportation Safety Committee

SUBJECT: HB 4116A, Distracted Driving

INTRODUCTION

House 4116A fixes some small areas of confusion from the distracted driving law passed during the 2017 legislative session (HB 2597). This includes modifying the hands-free section to include the minimal use of a finger to activate or deactivate a function of the device; clarifying that the motor carrier definition includes vehicles at 10,001 pounds and higher; adds business band radios as part of the two-way radio device definition; and creates exceptions for parked construction vehicles, large oversized vehicles, vehicles transporting livestock, and pilot cars that help the safe movement of the large oversized vehicles. Clarification to the look-back period for the elevating level of the distracted driving offense is now specifically designated only for offenses that occur after July 1, 2018.

DISCUSSION

The Oregon Legislature started addressing the dangers of distracted driving in 2007 and multiple modifications to the law have been approved ever since. A recent Oregon Court of Appeals case gave rise to the need for additional clarification of the distracted driving law in 2017. During the implementation of the law passed in 2017, areas of confusion were reported. HB 4116A addresses all of the areas of concern.

The Oregon Transportation Safety committee unanimously voted to support HB 4116A at our February 13, 2018 meeting.

SUMMARY

HB 4116A clarifies areas of confusion for Oregon's distracted driving law and will help to curb the unsafe behaviors related to the use of mobile electronic devices while driving.