



SENATE MAJORITY OFFICE

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Senate approves hands-free cell phone requirement for drivers *HB 2377 now goes to the House for a concurrence vote*

SALEM – The Oregon Senate approved legislation this afternoon that requires drivers to use hands-free devices with their cell phones when operating a motor vehicle. House Bill 2377 will take effect on January 1, 2010.

“This is a common sense safety issue,” said Senator Ginny Burdick (D-Portland), who carried the bill on the floor. “A ban on handheld cell phones will reduce traffic accidents, fatalities, and protect Oregonians.”

With final passage of HB 2377 Oregon will join six states, numerous municipalities, and the District of Columbia by prohibiting use of a hand-held cellular telephone while driving. Exceptions are provided for public safety and emergency personnel, persons operating a vehicle within the scope of employment, persons engaged in certain one-way communications, and FCC-licensed amateur radio and two-way radio operators. HB 2377 designates a violation as a primary offense punishable as a Class D traffic violation with maximum fine of \$90.

“As a cyclist, this is a really important step toward safe roads for everyone,” said Senator Jackie Dingfelder, a chief Senate sponsor of the bill. “Keeping both hands on the wheel may seem like a minor request, but there are already too many sad stories about drivers, passengers, and bicyclists being injured or killed because someone was distracted by a cell phone.”

HB 2377 was introduced in the House by Representatives Carolyn Tomei (D-Milwaukie) and Sal Esquivel (R-Medford). Senator Bill Morrisette (D-Springfield) was also a chief Senate sponsor.

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