



Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police

April 3, 2012

Representative Les Gara
Mailstop: 3100 Room 500
State Capitol,
Juneau AK 99801-1182

RE: HB 255, An Act prohibiting the driver of a motor vehicle from reading or typing a text message or other nonvoice message or communication on a cellular telephone, computer, or personal data assistant while driving a motor vehicle

Dear Representative Gara,

The Alaska Association of Chiefs of Police, Inc. (AACOP) represents Criminal Justice executives across Alaska; from Anchorage to Annette Island, Barrow to Bethel and Kotzebue to Ketchikan. Our 120 Members direct local, state and federal criminal justice agencies. We collaborate and work together toward one goal: making our state and communities safer.

AACOP leadership recently met to evaluate the impact on public safety of pending legislation before the 27th Alaska Legislature. One of the bills evaluated was HB 255, *An Act prohibiting the driver of a motor vehicle from reading or typing a text message or other nonvoice message or communication on a cellular telephone, computer, or personal data assistant while driving a motor vehicle.* **We are writing to express our unreserved support for this bill as it is currently drafted.**

I know that in your discussions with Cordova Chief Bob Griffiths, he expressed the importance of having enough flexibility within the statute to support public safety use of mobile devices that were not physically connected to their vehicles. Many small agencies do not have computers in their cars and must rely on mobile devices for emergency communications, alerts, and computer checks. While officers are taught to stop their vehicles to use these devices, in emergency cases this may not be possible. We appreciate the Legislature recognizing this need while still addressing the overall elimination of distracted driving.

If you have need of additional testimony from any of our members as the bill proceeds through the committee process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Respectfully,

Chief Tom Clemons,
President, AACOP
(907) 224-3338