



Municipality of Anchorage

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*Matt Claman,
Acting Mayor*

Office of the Mayor

February 5, 2008

Representative Berta Gardner
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol Building, RM 422
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Gardner:

I write to you in support of House Bill 15 (HB 15), an act relating to prohibiting the use of cellular telephones by minors when driving a motor vehicle.

As the statistics from the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration indicate, cell phones pose a significant distraction to drivers and distractions cause accidents. From my limited reading on the subject, it appears that cell phone usage by teen drivers is higher than the adult average.

As other states move toward protecting the public from distracted drivers, Alaskans should not be left behind. We, and our children, deserve those same protections. In particular, if we can assist young drivers form healthy driving habits through this measure, we will have started them on a course for a lifetime of safer driving.

Because this does not create a primary offense, I anticipate that it would not dramatically affect law enforcement budgets. In the meantime, it will be helpful in instructing young, impressionable drivers that the driver's seat is not the appropriate place for cell phone calls.

Thanks for your leadership on this important public safety issue

Sincerely,

Matt Claman
Acting Mayor

cc: Rob Heun, Anchorage Police Department

Community, Security, Prosperity

LESSMEIER & WINTERS

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VIA HAND DELIVERY

February 5, 2009

The Honorable Berta Gardner
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 424
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

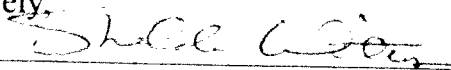
Re: State Farm Support for HB 15 - Ban on Cell Phone Use by Minors While Driving

Dear Representative Gardner:

State Farm strongly supports a ban on cell phone use by minors while driving. There is no doubt this bill will in fact immediately begin to save lives and prevent injuries. Drivers between the ages 16 - 19 are four times more likely to be involved in a crash as other drivers. One in five of all auto deaths is attributed to teen driving. The leading causes of teen accidents include inexperience and distraction. A recent Research Report by the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia and State Farm determined that 9 out of 10 teenagers reported teen use of cell phones while driving was common, and 7 out of 10 said they have observed teens driving while being emotionally upset using a cell phone. That same survey indicated legal prohibitions and restrictions were the top motivations teens said would keep them from using a cell phone while driving.

As the insurance industry representative on the Alaska Highway Safety Improvement Program, State Farm thanks you for sponsoring this bill. Through an alliance with Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, State Farm has access to a wealth of information and resources should you or other members of the Legislature desire. If we can provide you any information or assistance, please let me know.

Sincerely,



Sheldon E. Winters

Lobbyist for State Farm Insurance Companies

SEW/caf

Gardner 2-5-09 letter of support.wpd

Noah Hanson

From: Kristin McCune [kemccune@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 11:08 AM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: House Bill 15

Dear Rep. Gardner,

I heartily support your bill to limit cell phone use, however, I wish it would extend to all ages.

On a sunny afternoon in late May 2008 I was riding my bicycle in a quiet old Turnagain neighborhood on broad streets with no traffic or parked cars when an 18 year old drove up from behind me and turned into my immediate path. The vehicle became a wall a few inches in front of me. One of my first thoughts, as I lay on the ground before the ambulance came is that I was somehow invisible to this young woman even though there were no visual obstacles to her seeing me. Cell phone use was denied but is strongly suspected and records will be subpoenaed in the legal proceedings. Thank you for introducing this bill. I believe the age should be extended upward. At any rate, this is a very good start. I would hope that data is available in Alaska on cell phone related motor vehicle accidents to support passage of this type of legislation.

Sincerely,
Kristin McCune
Retired Public Health Nurse

1/14/2009

Noah Hanson

From: Jim Campbell [jimc_79@msn.com]
Sent: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 6:33 AM
To: Rep. Berta Gardner
Subject: Bravo!!

I applaud your bill to ban cell phone use while driving. I am 48 years old, I drive, and I have a cell phone. The ban should apply to me also. Please work your magic to make driving and cell phone use (and texting, and tittering [what the heck is that?!]) illegal for everyone. I can't believe we have allowed it to continue as long we have; we all know that a person's driving is impaired while driving and talking on the cell phone. Thank you for putting this forth.

Sincerely,

Jim Campbell

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