
OLR Bill Analysis

SB 61

AN ACT EXEMPTING AMATEUR RADIO OPERATORS USING HAND-HELD RADIOS FROM THE PROHIBITION ON USING HAND-HELD MOBILE TELEPHONES AND MOBILE ELECTRONIC DEVICES WHILE DRIVING.

SUMMARY:

This bill allows an individual with a Federal Communications Commission amateur radio station license (commonly know as ham operator), under any circumstance, to use a hand-held radio while driving on a highway.

Current law bans the use of hand-held cell phones or mobile electronic devices while driving, except by the following under the circumstances specified: (1) peace officers, firefighters, and ambulance or authorized emergency vehicle drivers performing their official job duties and (2) armed forces members while operating a military vehicle. Also, a driver may use a hand-held cell phone solely to communicate about an emergency with an emergency response operator, hospital, physician's office or health clinic, ambulance company, or fire or police department. And school bus drivers may use the phones under the same circumstances and also to place emergency calls to school officials.

EFFECTIVE DATE: October 1, 2012

BACKGROUND

Mobile Electronic Device

The law defines a "mobile electronic device" as any hand-held or portable electronic equipment capable of providing data communication between two or more people. It includes text messaging or paging devices, personal digital assistants, laptop computers, video game equipment, digital video disk players, and equipment that takes or transmits digital photographs. It does not

include audio equipment or equipment installed in the vehicle to provide (1) navigation, emergency, or other aid to the driver or (2) video entertainment to rear-seat passengers.

COMMITTEE ACTION

Public Safety and Security Committee

Joint Favorable

Yea 23 Nay 0 (03/13/2012)