

Testimony of Ron Hashiro  
Chair and Members of the City Council  
March 18, 2009  
Bill 4, CD1 (09)

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HONOLULU, HAWAII

Chairman Apo and members of the Council, my name is Ron Hashiro and I SUPPORT WITH AMENDMENTS the purpose of this Bill to promote traffic safety by controlling cell phone use and texting by drivers.

However, I FEEL STRONGLY THAT "Amateur radio operators licensed by the Federal Communications Commission" should be added to section C as persons excluded from this bill.

The added language to exempt amateur radio operators from the cellphone bill is modeled after Washington State's cellphone law which has passed and is in effect. The URL for the Washington State Bill is at:

<http://www.leg.wa.gov/pub/BillInfo/2007-08/Pdf/Bills/Senate%20Passed%20Legislature/5037-S.PL.pdf>

The Amateur Radio Service, as "ham radio" is known by it's official Federal Communications Commisison designation, are for qualified and licensed persons of any age who are interested in radio technique solely with a personal aim and without pecuniary interest. These services present an opportunity for self-training, intercommunication, technical investigations and public service as outlined in 47 CFR 97.1.

I am an Extra class amateur radio operator, and have been licensed for more then 33 years. I actively participate in the community as a communications volunteer, instructor and mentor for emergency communications, and have served Hawaii State Civil Defense and C&C Department of Emergency Management since 1983. I am also a volunteer examiner for FCC licensing exams for those seeking to pass the licensing exam and obtain their amateur radio license.

Amateur radio operators have a long standing history of public service and emergency communications. These aspects became evident during Hurricane Iniki, when amateur radio operators were the key means of communications between Kauai and Oahu. A number of the contributions by amateur radio operators was chronicled in an article contained in the national journal for amateur radio, and a copy is viewable at the web page below. Among the things not covered in the article were the dozens of Hawaiian Tel technicians, also amateur radio operators, who provided supplemental operations and communications while mobile and portable.

Amateur radio played a key part in restoring inter-island phone service between Kauai and Oahu by expediting the end-to-end coordination in real-time between Kauai and Oahu.

<http://www.qsl.net/ah6rh/am-radio/articles/iniki.html>

Similarly, amateur radio operators responded to areas of the Big Island and Maui during the October 15, 2006 Kiholo quake and provided on-scene, real-time reports to State Civil Defense. On Oahu, amateur radio operators responded to various locations, including hospitals. People in the community who needed electrical power for breathing assistance and other critical needs began converging at the hospitals. At one hospital, responding amateur radio operator Joe

Hunkler, a retired electronics technician, purchased material and used his skill to fabricate additional power cables so that these critical people could be hooked up to the hospital's generator power.

Mobile radios are an integral part of the amateur radio response. It provides information updates and ability to redeploy personnel in real-time. An important aspects of that readiness are (a) the regular testing of equipment and radio coverage, and (b) the development and enhancement of skills relating to safe operations while driving. These aspects are no different than what commercial operators and other regular users of two-way mobile radios undergo and are likewise an important part of the amateur radio response.

Amateur radio operators are proactive in setting up equipment, education, training and involvement well ahead of the emergency. In this time of severe economic dislocation, the private investment in equipment and the pool of community volunteers represents a means of providing supplemental and back up communications to government agencies and non-governmental organizations involved in emergency management and disaster response with little outlay.

During times of non-emergency, resident amateur radio operators welcome a number of visiting amateur radio operators (tourists) each day. One of the traditions of the amateur radio service is to welcome the visitors, provide information and motorist assistance to them. Most frequently, the contacts are while they are in their hotel rooms in Waikiki or traveling in their vehicles. Responding to their questions improves motorist safety by reducing uncertainty, hesitation and confusion when we give them real-time assurance in their travels. In all my years of amateur radio, I have never head of a tourist or resident involved in a motor vehicle accident while actively operating amateur radio equipment in their vehicle, as they often close and end their radio contact if road conditions warrant closer attention to their driving.

In contrast, I hear about residents and visitors enhancing general public safety while driving with their amateur radio. On the morning of Monday, March 9, 2009, a visitor from Eagle River, Alaska provided assistance via amateur radio while driving. Craig Bledsoe was travelling mauka on Piikoi when he witnessed a hit-and-run accident between a white limousine and a pedestrian. He called out on his radio for someone to place a 911 call. A retiree in Waikiki responded to his call on the radio, and patched Craig's radio transmission to the 911 police dispatcher, providing details of the situation, the vehicle and the license plate.

Given these and other stories and events, it would be a loss to the general public by having amateur radio operations curtailed by Bill 4 and I ask that you exempt amateur radio operators from Bill 4.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide constructive input into Bill 4.

Sincerely,

Ron Hashiro  
Amateur Radio Operator AH6RH