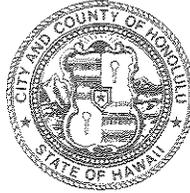


POLICE DEPARTMENT  
CITY AND COUNTY OF HONOLULU

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OUR REFERENCE TTN-LC

April 22, 2009

The Honorable Todd K. Apo, Chair  
and Members  
Honolulu City Council  
530 South King Street, Room 202  
Honolulu, Hawaii 96813

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CITY CLERK  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Dear Chair Apo and Councilmembers:

Subject: Bill 4 (2009), CD 2 FD1, Relating to the Use of Electronic Devices  
While Operating Motor Vehicles

I am Major Thomas Nitta of the Traffic Division, Honolulu Police Department (HPD), City and County of Honolulu.

The HPD strongly supports Councilmember Gary Okino's proposed Bill 4 (2009), CD 2, FD1, Relating to the Use of Electronic Devices While Operating Motor Vehicles. This bill addresses the safety issue of dividing the driver's attention while operating a motor vehicle with the use of electronic devices such as cellular phones, personal data assistants, video games, texting devices, and the myriad uses of these devices.

The HPD feels that Bill 4 (2009), CD 2, FD1, is a positive approach to the growing trend of society wanting to be connected or entertained. The safe operation of a motor vehicle is the primary duty of the driver, who should not be distracted or have his attention divided by these devices. This is a safety issue for all users of our roadways, drivers, passengers, pedestrians, and bicyclists.

Currently, no state in the United States of America has a total ban on the use of cellular phones while operating a motor vehicle. However, states with laws similar to Bill 4 (2009), CD2, FD1, allow the use of hands-free devices. It is reported that talking on a cellular phone and talking on a hands-free phone have approximately the same amount of cognitive distraction, which is important, but less dangerous than removing eyes from the roadway while dialing an electronic device, looking for items, or texting.

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and Members  
April 22, 2009  
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The intent of this bill in its current form is to address the prolific use of mobile electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle, the dangers in driver distraction/divided attention while operating a motor vehicle, not to address all forms of driver distraction, nor to totally prohibit and ban the use of every form of electronic devices while operating a motor vehicle. This Bill 4 (2009), CD 2, FD1, before this committee is practical, reasonable, and enforceable.

Thank you for this opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

  
Thomas T. Nitta, Major  
Traffic Division

APPROVED:

  
Kirk W. Caldwell  
Managing Director

APPROVED:

  
for: Boisse P. Correa  
Chief of Police