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April 22, 2024

The Honorable Rosemary Brown  
Senate Box 203040  
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3040

Dear Senator Brown:

I write concerning Senate Bill 37, PN 1458, *ENHANCED DRIVER RESPONSIBILITY (while operating an interactive wireless communication device)*. This bill as written will have a significant impact on amateur radio operators traveling in Pennsylvania. The language is broad enough to prohibit the use of mobile or handheld amateur radios in vehicles while driving. These radios are much like the radios used by public safety personnel in their vehicles but using other FCC authorized frequencies to communicate wirelessly with other amateur radio operators either fixed or mobile. I and other amateur radio operators think there should be an exemption for amateur radio operators.

In the original version sent to the House an exemption for the amateur radio service, also known as ham radio, was included. This exemption was stripped from the bill in the House and the version you have proposed no longer includes this important exemption.

While amateur radio is a hobby, a significant number of amateur radio operators are actively involved in Emergency Communications, or EmComm, efforts. Across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania most county Emergency Operations Centers include amateur radio equipment and have a team of volunteers who practice with drills and Simulated Emergency Tests. Amateur radio operators also provide safety communications to a variety of public service events. Further, the Amateur Radio Service regulations include language that outlines how amateur radio is to be incorporated into Emergency Communications. FCC rules 97.407, and other associated rules, outline the creation and operation of the Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Service, or RACES. Amateur radio operators are licensed to use these frequencies after passing tests of their knowledge in radio theory and the rules and regulations governing the operation of amateur radio stations.

I am painfully aware of the carnage being caused by distracted driving. I spent 25 years as a police officer, 28 years as a magisterial district judge or senior judge, and 50+ years as a volunteer firefighter, 12 of those as an EMT. To the best of my knowledge, I am unaware of even a single traffic accident caused by an amateur radio operator using their mobile radio equipment. Restricting amateur radio operators from mobile

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operations reduces their effectiveness and will negatively impact public safety and many public service events where we provide communications.

I urge you to withdraw support for PA Senate Bill 37 as it stands and include exemptions to support the amateur radio service as a resource for emergency communications before passage.

If you need further information, feel free to contact me using the phone or email address above.

Thank you for your attention and service.

Respectfully,



Carmine W. Prestia, Jr., K3CWP  
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- c: The Honorable Wayne Langerholic
- The Honorable Marty Flynn
- The Honorable Patrick Stefano
- The Honorable Judith Schwank
- The Honorable Steven Santarsiero
- The Honorable Lynda Schlegel Culver
- The Honorable Joe Pittman
- The Honorable Jay Costa
- The Honorable Chris Dush