

Terry Whiteside

SENATE HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

4

EXHIBIT NO. _____

DATE: 2-3-2011

BILL NO. SB 251

From: Gaghen, Peggie [GaghenP@ci.billings.mt.us]
Sent: Thursday, February 03, 2011 1:35 AM
To: Twhitesd@wtp.net
Subject: FW: SB 251

Terry,

The following is what I sent for the hearing. I REALLY appreciate your being such an advocate for good sense. Hope the trip goes well.

Good luck,
Peggie

From: Gaghen, Peggie
Sent: Thursday, February 03, 2011 1:32 AM
To: kaufmann@mt.net
Subject: SB 251

Dear Senator Kaufmann:

Unfortunately, my schedule did not allow me to come to Helena to testify in today's hearing. I greatly appreciate your efforts in regard to SB251. I am enclosing remarks to be entered in to the record. Thank you.

Members of the Highways and Transportation Committee:

My thanks to Senator Christine Kaufmann for crafting SB 251.

My name is Peggie Gaghen. I live in Billings and serve on the City Council. Nearly two years ago I brought forth an initiative to study the dangers of driver distraction while using a hand-held cell phone or texting while operating a vehicle; an ad-hoc committee was appointed. Members representing the cell phone industry, insurance, the medical community, legal, police, schools/driver's ed, high school and college student body presidents, an over the road trucker, parents, FAA licensed radio operators, cab and limo operators all had input as we studied the issue of enacting an ordinance to curb driver distraction.

After numerous meetings and gathering large quantities of information and statistics, the group recommended an ordinance to the City Council that was passed and enacted beginning October 31, 2010. The committee was unanimous in supporting the measure for all felt it necessary to emphasize and protect public safety.

There was very little opposition from citizens at public hearings, far more were in support of the measure and many accounts of accidents caused by individuals not paying attention to their driving were shared. The safety of individuals in the car with drivers who were distracted was of concern as was the safety of cars, bike riders, or pedestrians that such drivers might encounter.

Although the Police Department has not had a long time to gather statistics, it does appear that people are paying heed to the ordinance and you observe fewer drivers chatting on hand-held devices. We made a big effort to inform and educate folks about the enactment of our local ordinance.

I heartily support the enactment of a State-wide ordinance to curb hand-held cell phone use and texting while driving. I commend the Committee for hearing this matter and thoughtfully considering the safety of their constituents.

Thank you,

Peggie Gaghen
87 Mountain View Blvd.
Billings, MT 59101
City Council--Ward 1