

(Date)

Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814
Fax: 916-445-4633

RE: SUPPORT FOR SB 1613

Dear Governor Schwarzenegger:

I am writing (*if on behalf of an organization, insert “on behalf of [organization name]”*) to express strong support for SB 1613, a bill that would prohibit drivers from using a handheld wireless phone while operating an automobile, unless the phone is specifically designed for hands-free operation or when used in an emergency, and **to urge you to approve this legislative bill.**

I, along with the California Bicycle Coalition, support SB 1613 because it aims to increase safety on the roadways shared by bicyclists and motor vehicles by modifying cellular phone use in moving automobiles. While we think that this bill is a step in the right direction, we recommend that cellular phones be banned from use while operating a motor vehicle in California, except for an emergency.

Although headsets allow drivers to keep their hands on the steering wheel, their attention is still diverted while searching for the phone in the vehicle, dialing, conversing, hanging up, picking up a dropped phone, and/or receiving a call.

Engaging in cellular phone conversations reduces drivers' ability to concentrate on the road. University of Utah researchers found that both hand held and hands free cell phone users participating in phone conversations missed twice as many simulated traffic signals as when they were not talking on the cell phone and took longer to react to those signals that they did detect. Research cited in *Human Factors: The Journal of Human Factors and Ergonomics Society* stated that the cognitive demands of conversation were not eliminated with hands-free devices.

Automobile operators' use of cellular phones while driving increases the risk of injury to both themselves and the bicyclists sharing the road with them. The Insurance Institute for Highway Safety reported that drivers using both hand held and hands free cell phones were four times as likely to get into a crash that could cause injuries serious enough to land them in the hospital.

Thank you in advance for making our state's roadways safer for bicyclists via your approval of SB 1613.

Sincerely,

Your Name

Organization Name (if applicable)

(If not on letterhead, provide address and phone number)