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FISCAL IMPACT REPORT

SPONSOR: Rawson DATE TYPED: 03/04/01 HB _____
 SHORT TITLE: Study Accidents Involving Wireless Phone Use SB SJM-11
 ANALYST: Valdes

APPROPRIATION

Appropriation Contained		Estimated Additional Impact		Recurring or Non-Rec	Fund Affected
FY01	FY02	FY01	FY02		
			No additional fiscal impact		

(Parenthesis () Indicate Expenditure Decreases)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Legislative Finance Committee

SUMMARY

Synopsis of Bill

Senate Joint Memorial 11 requests that the Traffic Safety Bureau of the State Highway and Transportation Department study and collect data to determine the amount of motor vehicle accidents involving wireless phone use.

Significant Issues

This memorial identifies the large number of accidents caused by distraction or inattention. It relates this inattention to the possible use of wireless communications devices. There are a large number of traffic safety problems occur while drivers use wireless phones. While it is difficult to determine whether wireless phone distractions have caused motor vehicle accidents, it is quite likely they have been a major contributing factor. The benefits of using wireless phones while driving must be compared to the potential risk of traffic accidents caused by distraction while these devices are in use.

Due to the potential dangers of using wireless phones while driving, this memorial directs the Traffic Safety Bureau to study and collect data to determine the amount of motor vehicle accidents involving wireless phone use. The memorial also requests a report on findings by the department to the appropriate legislative interim committee prior to the 2002 Legislative Session.

PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

Senate Joint Memorial 11 -- Page 2

The study requested by this memorial could lead to the department identifying ways to improve traffic safety performance measures in the state.

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This study is within the range of duties required by the Traffic Safety Bureau and can be funded within existing program funds.

ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS

This study and report will be an additional task of the Traffic Safety Bureau.

OTHER SUBSTANTIVE ISSUES

Wireless phone use has been determined as a significant factor in traffic accidents nationally. Some states have already adopted laws to curb the use of these devices while driving a motor vehicle. This study would be appropriate as consideration for improving traffic safety.

MFV/njw