

A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE TRAFFIC SAFETY BUREAU OF THE DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE COMMISSION FOR THE BLIND TO CONVENE JOINTLY A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE RISK OF HYBRID AND OTHER QUIET CARS TO THE BLIND AND OTHERS.

WHEREAS, vehicles such as hybrid or electric cars that are designed to provide the desirable benefits of fuel efficiency and low pollutants often use technologies other than gasoline-powered engines; and

WHEREAS, use of these technologies can result in a car that is much quieter than a gasoline-powered vehicle; and

WHEREAS, hybrid cars are so quiet when operating only with their electric motors that blind people and other pedestrians, equestrians and bicyclists may not be able to hear them; and

WHEREAS, preliminary findings of a research project conducted at the university of California show that hybrid cars operating in electric mode must be forty percent closer to pedestrians than combustion-engine vehicles before they can be heard; and

WHEREAS, the potential danger of hybrid, electric or other quiet cars is exacerbated in intersections and parking lots; and

WHEREAS, not only the blind, but also other pedestrians

and children, runners, equestrians, bicyclists and the elderly may be at greater risk due to quiet cars; and

WHEREAS, it can be projected that quiet technology and the prevalence of hybrid, electric and other quiet cars will increase significantly in years to come; and

WHEREAS, measures that take into account the multisensory nature of traffic detection may be used to alert pedestrians, and especially blind pedestrians, to the presence of quiet cars;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the traffic safety bureau of the department of transportation and the commission for the blind be requested to convene jointly a task force and provide the necessary staff support to study the risk of hybrid and other quiet cars to the blind and others; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force conveners be requested to include on the task force, in addition to themselves, representatives from the motor vehicle division of the taxation and revenue department, the aging and long-term services department and the national federation of the blind of New Mexico; an individual who is certified as an orientation and mobility instructor of the blind; at least one person representing the interests of the automotive manufacturing industry; a representative of the New Mexico auto dealers association; and other members as the task force

conveners deem appropriate; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force:

A. study:

(1) the effects of vehicle sound on pedestrian safety; and

(2) the available technology that may enhance the safety of blind pedestrians;

B. review all available research regarding the effects of vehicle sound on pedestrian safety;

C. consult with consumer groups that represent individuals who are blind and other pedestrians and bicyclists and with advocates for the safety of children; and

D. conduct meetings to receive input from experts on acoustics, automobile design, environmental quality, orientation and mobility for blind people, pedestrian and bicycle safety and other relevant fields and from interested members of the public; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force identify and evaluate barriers to implementation, necessary regulation and the potential cost of implementing such measures; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its findings and recommendations to the interim legislative health and human services committee by July 1, 2010; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be transmitted electronically to the governor; the chair of the

interim legislative health and human services committee; the legislative council service; the secretaries of transportation, taxation and revenue and aging and long-term services; the president of the national federation of the blind of New Mexico; the director of the New Mexico commission for the blind; the president of the association of international automobile manufacturers; the administrator of the national highway traffic safety administration, the president of the society of automotive engineers and the president of the alliance of automobile manufacturers, who are studying the issue of quiet cars; the New Mexico automotive dealers association; and United States Representatives Edolphus Towns and Cliff Stearns, sponsors of the Pedestrian Safety Enhancement Act of 2009, H.R. 734, 111th Congress (2009-2010).