

HOUSE JOINT MEMORIAL 77

49TH LEGISLATURE - STATE OF NEW MEXICO - FIRST SESSION, 2009

INTRODUCED BY

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A JOINT MEMORIAL

REQUESTING THE MOTOR VEHICLE DIVISION OF THE TAXATION AND
REVENUE DEPARTMENT TO CONVENE A TASK FORCE TO STUDY THE RISK OF
HYBRID AND OTHER QUIET CARS TO THE BLIND AND OTHER PEDESTRIANS.

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
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

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1 operating in electric mode must be forty percent closer to
2 pedestrians than combustion-engine vehicles before they can be
3 heard; and

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

7 WHEREAS, not only the blind, but also other pedestrians,
8 such as children, runners, bicyclists and the elderly, may be
9 at greater risk due to quiet cars; and

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

13 WHEREAS, measures such as the addition to the vehicle of a
14 noise-generating device could be utilized to alert blind people
15 and other pedestrians of the approach of a hybrid or electric
16 car in enough time to allow them to assess the proximity,
17 speed, location and direction of the car and to avoid or remove
18 themselves from danger;

19 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE
20 STATE OF NEW MEXICO that the motor vehicle division of the
21 taxation and revenue department be requested to convene a task
22 force and provide the necessary staff support to study the risk
23 of hybrid and other quiet cars to the blind and other
24 pedestrians; and

25 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force include

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1 representation from the New Mexico commission for the blind,
2 the New Mexico affiliate of the national federation of the
3 blind, the aging and long-term services department, an
4 individual who is certified as an orientation and mobility
5 instructor of the blind and at least one person representing
6 the interests of the automotive industry; and

7 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force evaluate the
8 potential for establishment of minimum sound level standards
9 and other measures to alert blind and other pedestrians to the
10 danger of an approaching quiet car; and

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

14 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the task force report its
15 findings and recommendations to the interim legislative health
16 and human services committee at its November 2009 meeting; and

17 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this memorial be
18 transmitted to the New Mexico affiliate of the national
19 federation of the blind, the director of the New Mexico
20 commission for the blind, the secretaries of taxation and
21 revenue and aging and long-term services and the New Mexico
22 automotive dealers association.