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U.S. Department
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**National Highway
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March 24, 2003

Honorable Barbara K. Cegavske
Nevada State Senate
401 Carson Street
Carson City, Nevada 89701

Dear Senator Cegavske:

We regret being unable to testify on this important piece of legislation, Graduated Drivers Licensing. In the United States, automobile crashes are the number one cause of death and injury for teenagers 15 through 20 years of age. Sixteen-year-old drivers have the highest crash rate of all teenagers. They crash more on a per mile driven basis than all age groups up to 80 year old drivers.

A study on the graduated licensing law in North Carolina revealed that between 1996 and 2000 all crashes involving 16 year old drivers decreased 26 percent; injury crashes decreased by 30 percent. Daytime crash risk decreased 21 percent while nighttime crashes (9 p.m. – 5 a.m.) decreased 52 percent. Single vehicle crashes were reduced by 36 percent and multi-vehicle crashes were down 22 percent during this time period. Preliminary results from evaluations being conducted in Ohio and California are reporting similar findings.

Similarly, a study conducted by the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety of Florida's system showed a nine percent reduction in fatality and injury crashes for the 15 to 17 year old age groups. A NHTSA study to evaluate the effectiveness of the system in Michigan found similar success. Michigan's evaluation included a survey on parental attitudes on the graduated driver licensing system. The survey of parents of young novice drivers found widespread approval for the program (96.9 percent).

The facts and the studies show that Graduated Drivers Licensing laws do work at saving the lives of our young drivers, which is why 38 states have passed this type of law. NHTSA and I firmly support Graduated Drivers Licensing laws and their life saving benefits.

Respectfully,

David Manning, PhD
Regional Administrator
NHTSA Region 9

