



**Joint Commission on Technology and Science
Executive Committee Meeting
September 9, 2008 2:00 p.m.
House Room D, General Assembly Building**

I. Call to order

Delegate May called the meeting to order.

II. Texting While Driving Bills (HB 39, HB 609)

Delegate Scott presented HB 39 to the Executive Committee and asked that the bill be carried forward to the 2009 Session. At the request of Delegate May, Delegate Scott agreed to have JCOTS staff work with him, Delegate Cosgrove, and Delegate Eisenberg on a revised draft to present at the final JCOTS meeting of the 2008 Interim.

Dr. Tom Dingus, Director, Virginia Tech Transportation Institute presented to the committee on distracted driving and cell phone use. Dr. Dingus presented a portion of his findings from the 100-Car Naturalistic Study. Delegate May asked how a heads-up display or hands free devices would affect drivers. Dr. Dingus responded that heads-up displays would likely not pose a large problem as they maintain the driver's forward field of vision. As for hands-free devices, Dr. Dingus responded that true hand-free devices (allows user to dial using voice recognition) would be a major safety improvement if a driver is going to use a cell phone.

The committee next discussed the current cell phone ban for drivers under 18 years of age. These drivers are already prohibited from using cell phones while driving, which includes texting.

During public comment a representative from AAA stated their support for the bill and cited a statistic that ranks Virginia 6th in the nation in use of text messaging.



III. Electronic Notice (HB 636)

JCOTS staff introduced HB 636 and reviewed the relevant provisions of the bill. A representative from USAA addressed the committee and stated that allowing electronic notices to be delivered by insurance companies would greatly benefit many of USAA's customers, especially their military members currently serving overseas. A member of the Independent Insurance Agents addressed the committee and stated his concern that electronic notice would not provide sufficient notice in the case of cancellations. The committee discussed some of these issues, especially problems associated with undelivered emails. The committee generally agreed that many of the technical concerns regarding undelivered email notices could be provided for in the legislation.

With the agreement of the committee, Delegate May directed staff to work with representatives from USAA and the Independent Insurance Agents to develop draft legislation to present at the final JCOTS meeting.

IV. I-81 Biofuels Initiative

Dr. Mark Downing, Oak Ridge National Laboratory presented to the committee on the Oak Ridge partnership with Virginia Tech and Penn State to develop a biofuels corridor along Interstate 81. The presentation focused on how Virginia Tech and Southside and Southwest Virginia could contribute to the effort. The biofuels corridor would focus on establishing localized biofuel production using cellulosic materials and local farmers. The full presentation is available on the JCOTS website (<http://jcots.state.va.us>).

V. Other Business

VI. Public Comment

VII. Adjournment