

**SENATE BILL REPORT**

**SB 5315**

**AS REPORTED BY COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS,  
FEBRUARY 5, 1993**

**Brief Description:** Regulating cellular communication use by state employees.

**SPONSORS:** Senators Erwin, Haugen, M. Rasmussen, Amondson, Hargrove, Sheldon, L. Smith, Prince and Deccio

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS**

**Majority Report:** That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5315 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators Haugen, Chairman; Drew, Vice Chairman; Loveland, Oke, Owen, von Reichbauer, and Winsley.

**Staff:** Barbara Howard (786-7410)

**Hearing Dates:** February 2, 1993; February 5, 1993

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON WAYS & MEANS**

**Staff:** Martin Chaw (786-7711)

**Hearing Dates:** February 24, 1993

**BACKGROUND:**

With the development of cellular telecommunications technology, more and more state officials and employees are using cellular telephones to conduct business, frequently from a car or other vehicle. There are no statutory guidelines for the use of cellular telephones (other than the prohibition against using public property for private purposes), nor is there any monetary limit on the dollar charges for such calls.

The Office of Financial Management (OFM) is responsible for setting reimbursement schedules for a variety of state activities, and for issuing an accounting procedures manual for all state agencies. The Department of Information Services (DIS) has jurisdiction over state telecommunications systems.

**SUMMARY:**

In addition to setting the allowances for lodging and subsistence expenses for state employee travel, the Director of the Office of Financial Management (OFM) is required to prescribe the expense allowances for use of cellular telephones. Reimbursement for cellular communication expenses is limited to \$150 per month, with no carry-over credit.

**EFFECT OF PROPOSED GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS SUBSTITUTE:**

OFM, in consultation with DIS develops regulations for the use of cellular phones by state employees.

Several criteria are to be considered:

(a) Agency heads retain the authority to determine who is assigned such phones;

(b) Amounts of expenditures for these communications are delineated in the OFM accounting procedures manual;

(c) Reasonable limits must be set for reimbursement of employees who use their own cellular telephones on state business; and

(d) Consideration must be given to the special needs of law enforcement and other field personnel in situations of emergency or where their own safety is in question.

**Appropriation:** none

**Revenue:** none

**Fiscal Note:** available

**TESTIMONY FOR (Government Operations):**

The regulations are needed, but the original bill would create some problems, both in the specified maximum amount, and in not addressing the needs of emergency personnel. The proposed substitute addresses those concerns.

**TESTIMONY AGAINST (Government Operations):** None

**TESTIFIED (Government Operations):** Joseph W. Murray, Asst. Dir.,  
Emergency Management, DCD (pro)