



AB 8: Hit & Run Emergency Alerts

SUMMARY

AB 8 adds Section 8594.15 to the Government Code to authorize the use of the state's existing network of changeable message signs to help apprehend a suspect when a hit and run accident has occurred that results in a fatality or serious injury.

BACKGROUND

Hit-and-run accidents are epidemic throughout California, with law enforcement officials as well as biking and walking advocates looking for ways to hold the cowards who commit these crimes more accountable for their actions. City of Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck, representing a city that has become the hit and run epicenter of California, stated that a combination of new laws, stiffer penalties, and increased awareness are needed in order to cause drivers to take greater responsibility for their actions. AB 8 falls into the category of new laws Chief Beck calls for.

AB 8 creates a "Yellow Alert" that will allow local law enforcement to ask the California Highway Patrol to access the state's network of changeable message signs, on a regional level, when there is a hit and run accident if certain criteria are met. The criteria stated in the bill are:

-A person has been killed or has suffered serious bodily injury during a hit and run accident and the local law enforcement agency has either:

- A complete license plate number of the suspect's vehicle;
- A partial license plate number and the make or
- The identity of the suspect.

It is only after this threshold is met that CHP would consider the request by local law enforcement to access the changeable message sign network.

This measure is based on legislation that was recently enacted in the state of Colorado, where a rise in tragic hit and runs, followed by the tragic hit and run death of Denver valet Jose Medina just days before his wedding, prompted the creation of the Medina Alert for hit and run accidents for all of Colorado. In the period of time that these alerts

were used in the city of Denver, before statewide enactment, 13 of 17 hit and runs that triggered these alerts were solved—a nearly 76% success rate.

WHAT THE BILL DOES

AB 8 gives law enforcement a new tool to combat the hit and run epidemic that has plagued California. Allowing local law enforcement to access the state's network of changeable message signs will enable information about a suspect to get out faster and to more people, thus increasing the chances of an arrest. Too often, the trail in these cases runs cold because the lag time in getting out information to the public allows these criminals to go into hiding and repair their vehicles to eliminate any evidence of their crimes. This bill will give hope to the families of hit and run victims that justice will be served.

SUPPORT:

City of Los Angeles
Walk and Bike Mendocino
Silicon Valley Bicycle Coalition
Coalition for Sustainable Transport
San Diego County Bicycle Coalition
Shasta Living Streets
Marin County Bicycle Coalition
Association of Orange County Deputy Sheriffs
People Power
Inland Empire Biking Alliance
Los Angeles Walks
Safe Routes to School National Partnership
ABATE
California Bicycle Coalition
American Motorcyclist Association
California Council of the Blind
San Luis Obispo County Bicycle Coalition
AFSCME
Sacramento Area Bicycle Advocates
Los Angeles County Bicycle Coalition
California Walks
California Emergency Nurses Association
Mothers Against Drunk Driving
California State Firefighters Association
San Francisco Bicycle Coalition
California Police Chiefs Association

CONTACT:

Nardos Girma

(916) 319-2043