

# 3rd Annual Bozo Run

Motorcycle run & benefit sponsored by the  
Columbia County Chapter of ABATE of New York  
**Sunday, September 20, 2009**



*In memory of Bozo the Cat, a victim of animal abuse.*  
Sign-up 11am Plaza Diner, Route 9 Greenport - Ride at 12:15  
\$10 donation per person

Monetary donations are split between all three non-profit organizations.  
40% CGHS - 40% AnimalKind, Inc. 20% Columbia chapter ABATE of NY

*You don't have to ride a motorcycle to participate!*

Ride ends at Meadowgreen's Rt.9H, Ghent at aprox. 4pm  
Food and Drink available  
Music provided by DJ Terry Johnson

For information on particular items needed for donations please contact  
Jen Ross at Columbia-Greene Humane Society 518.828.6044 [www.cghs.org](http://www.cghs.org)  
Katrin Hecker at Animalkind, Inc. 518.822.8643 [www.animalkindinfo.com](http://www.animalkindinfo.com)

For information about the ride contact  
Bob Mayo 518.851.7512 or Karen Kittle 518.755.0347

[columbiaabate@yahoo.com](mailto:columbiaabate@yahoo.com)      [www.geocities.com/columbiaabate](http://www.geocities.com/columbiaabate)

### What is ABATE?

**AMERICAN BIKERS AIMED TOWARD EDUCATION** is a non-profit corporation formed to promote and protect the interests of New York Motorcyclists. **ABATE** monitors and interacts with the legislative process, enhancing the image of the sport, and providing educational and social opportunities for members as well as non-members. **ABATE** will continue to strive to become acquainted with both the issues and people of the motorcycling community.

We encourage all our members to be informed registered voters. ABATE supports the Motorcycle Rider Education classes currently being offered throughout NYS. We welcome interested persons to any of our activities and to join our organization.

**ABATE** does not discriminate - all makes of motorcycles are WELCOME.

### ABATE Aims & Purposes

- A. To review and inform our members about federal, state, and local levels of government motorcycle legislation and to promote favorable motorcycle legislation
- B. To improve road condition thus making roads safer for motorcyclists
- C. To help prevent accidents through education.
- D. To promote positive community relations
- E. To promote political involvement of motorcyclists
- F. To act as a legislative liaison between motorcyclists and government authorities, police departments, government agencies, insurance companies, and other organizations.
- G. To report and discourage biased news reporting of motorcyclists
- H. To present and promote a better public image of motorcycling..

### Columbia County Chapter Officers 2009

#### **President**

Karen Blake-Kittle 518- 392-7354 kbk84@msn.com

#### **Vice President**

Peter Shufelt 518- 828-1524 havetool@verizon.net

#### **Treasurer**

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#### **Secretary**

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#### **Membership**

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#### **Products**

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**Road Captain** Bob Mayo 518-851-7512 rescurrobt@yahoo.com

**Asst. Road Captain** Jack Wrigley

**Safety Officer** Dave Wrigley 519-755-4242

**Email Coordinator** Karen Blake-Kittle

**Public Relations** Paula Palleschi

**Regional Coordinator** Gary Myers 845-331-9433 born2jeep@yahoo.com

The Motorcycle Riders Foundation (MRF)

<http://www.mrf.org> .

The MRF is your national voice, acting as Your Washington office. They will supply you with immediate information on issues of importance and, after careful analysis, recommend a careful course of action.

The American Motorcycle Association (AMA)

<http://www.ama-cycle.org/>

Motorcycle Association of New York (MANYS)

<http://www.manys.org>

New York State Dept. of Motor Vehicles

<http://www.nysdmv.state.ny.us>

Motorcycle Safety Foundation (MSF)

<http://www.msf-usa.org>

For State Assembly information including members, committees and bills: <http://www.assembly.state.ny.us>

For Senate information: <http://www.senate.state.ny.us>

For U. S. House of Representatives for Federal bills:

<http://www.house.gov>

For legislative information or search bill information

<http://thomas.loc.gov>

To learn how government works, Project vote smart:

<http://www.vote-smart.org/index.phtml>

**Next Monthly Meeting: September 10th, 7pm**  
**Whitestone Café, Ghent, NY \*\*Officer Nominations\***

CALL TO ACTION IS NECESSARY OR IT SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE.-KBK Many state legislatures and city councils are making lots of noise about motorcycles, with new ordinances popping up across the country to silence loud exhausts. "Loud Pipes Save Lives" has been a biker mantra for years, but politicians spurred by citizen complaints have discovered new ways to muffle unwanted exhaust tones.

The Albuquerque City Council has voted to approve an ordinance making revving of motorcycle engines downtown a vehicle nuisance. Amending Section 7-10-3 ROA 1994, The Vehicle Nuisance Ordinance now reads: "It shall be unlawful for any person to engage in exhibition driving in the Downtown Quiet Zone by operating a vehicle in a manner that willfully creates excessive engine noise because of revving the engine to magnify the engine noise."

Bikers blasting through East Greenwich, Rhode Island may want to steer clear of town. The Town Council unanimously passed an emergency ordinance in late July allowing the police to pull over and levy fines on bikers if the noise-rating data stamped into the chrome of their exhaust doesn't match the label on the bike frame. Modified exhaust systems are outlawed. The ordinance, now provides for fines \$500 for the first offense, and jumps to \$700 the second time and \$1,000 for the third and each subsequent violation.

In West Virginia, the Charleston City Council let it be known loud and clear that nuisance noise will not be tolerated, and unanimously passed an ordinance on August 17 to crack down on loud music, barking dogs and revving of car and motorcycle engines in residential areas, with fines up to \$250.

In an attempt to silence community concerns regarding excessive motorcycle exhaust sound, the Boston City Council fast-tracked enactment of Docket 0658 on June 3, 2009. The new ordinance mandates that all on-highway motorcycles built after December 31, 1982 must have either OEM (original equipment manufacturer) or aftermarket exhaust systems that comply with the US EPA labeling provision in the Code of Federal Regulations. Violations will result in a \$300 fine.

Earlier this year in California a bill was held over that would have required periodic emissions testing for 2000-and-newer on-road motorcycles in an effort to make aftermarket exhaust systems illegal if they do not comply with EPA labeling.

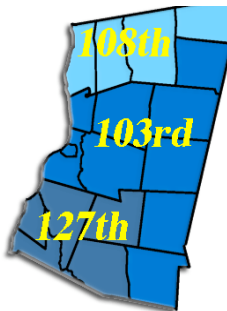
The Motorcycle Industry Council (MIC) has teamed with the Society of Automotive Engineers International (SAE) to produce a stationary roadside sound test standard that can be used to determine whether a streetbike exhaust system emits excessive sound. MIC President Tim Buche stated, "The new SAE standard provides a much-needed alternative to outright bans, restrictions and sound test standards that vary state to state and city to city, frustrating riders, exhaust system manufacturers, and municipal governments alike."

**Assemblyman Marcus Molinaro (R-103)[molinarom@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:molinarm@assembly.state.ny.us)**

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**Assemblyman Tim Gordon (R-108)[gordont@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:gordont@assembly.state.ny.us)**

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**Assemblyman Peter Lopez (R-127)[lopezp@assembly.state.ny.us](mailto:lopezp@assembly.state.ny.us)**

**Columbia County, NY**

**"Friends Helping Friends"  
Benefit Run & Pig Roast  
For Steven Martin**

**Proceeds to help cover  
medical expenses**

**Saturday, August 29, 2009  
Ghent rod & Gun Club  
County Rt 9, Ghent, NY  
Donations \$20 perperson**

**Registration 9am  
Ride 11am Sharp  
Pig roast to open at 1pm  
ALL WELCOME**



**Live Music  
Door Prizes  
Raffles  
50/50**

**For more information  
Call Deb  
518-392-6172**

**Donations also being accepted  
at  
Kinderhook National Bank**

Chapter meeting minutes from Aug 6th, 2009. Meeting called to order at 7:09 pm with 37 members present. Pledge of Allegiance recited. Welcome new members Al Schultze and Walter Doty.

**Motion #23-09** made by Prospector with second, to waive the reading of the previous month's minutes. Unanimous.

**President Report:** given by Karen--A fellow ABATE member, Onondaga chapter Sgt @ Arms, Brenda Force was in an YROW accident with an SUV and died as a result. Also brought to attention that Bruce Rossmeyer, was also killed on his motorcycle at Sturgis. I cannot stress enough the

importance of taking that second look A moment of silence was taken.

**V.President Report** given by Pete--Would also like to take a moment of silence for Michael Westover, a past fellow chapter member, who was devoted to our Toy Run and help organize in the beginning. Many bikes attended the wake even through the rain, a chapter Toy Run patch was given to his family on behalf of the chapter for his continued dedication to the Toy Run and the Edith Casey Stocking Fund.

**Treasurer's Report:** given by Tricia

**Ending Balance \$3888.38** Savings Bal. (200Club) \$8438.78 Report accepted as read.

MRF 'MEETING OF THE MINDS' 2009 PRE-REGISTRATION BY AUGUST 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2009  
 September 24<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup>, Sheraton Bloomington Hotel Minneapolis, MN  
[www.mrf.org](http://www.mrf.org)

**Membership Report from Pete S.as State Office reported 7/31/09**

Membership continues to steadily grow. Thank you to all and should all be proud.

<b><u>Outstanding</u></b>	<b><u>JULY</u></b>	<b><u>SEPTEMBER</u></b>	Tom Howard	John Meyer
<b><u>Member dues</u></b>	<i>Jen Zola</i>	<b><u>DUES</u></b>	Tom Hunt	Barry Moorehouse
<b><u>MAY</u></b>	<i>John Smith</i>	Al Archer	Harold Jensen	Sr.
<i>Tony Barry</i>	<i>Robert Green</i>	Lee Bledsoe	Marilee Kellard	Paula Palleschi
<i>Dave Bratton</i>	<b><u>AUGUST DUES</u></b>	Lee Bush	Chris Killeen	Randy Proper
<i>Tom Donlon</i>	Gene Gaylord	Rick Cort	Chris Kinnicutt	Jen Ross
<i>Mike Rutkowski</i>	Earl Simpson	Martin Hanlon	Lynn Kratt	Scott VanAlphen
<i>Mark Sawicky</i>	Art Voetsch	Mathew Hauser	Paul Krich	Gail Woods
<i>Jason Seaman</i>		Chris Hough	Dick Leavitt	

**Legislative Report:** by Prospector Not much to report.

**Sgt at Arms Report:** given by Jack. Everything is ok.

**Newsletter Report:** given by Karen Forgot to send out email that Newsletter is online.

**Products Report:** given by Paula. Summer tees (tanks) are in cost is \$10 each.

**PR Report** given by Paula Has started a scrapbook of newspaper articles if you have something to pass along doesn't matter how old it is. Also have followed up with Taconic Driving School, they are distributing our pamphlets and will continue to do so. Jack: states that VanKleeck's Tire is running a radio-ad encouraging motorists to watch out for motorcyclists and highway workers. **Motion#24-09** Would like to recognize their efforts is safety and awareness by chapter certificate. Unanimous.

**Road Captain's Report:** Given by Bob M. --Route are set for both the Bozo Run and the Toy Run. Good turnout for the Mountain Run. Everyone was treated well by establishments, Mel donated back to the chapter. States to members present, regarding a possible benefit run for Camp Sundown. Proposed night run for the camp attendees to ride as passengers. Will speak to Mrs. Mahar regarding liability issues, Karen will discuss as well with the state office, liability restraints on our end. Report back at next scheduled meeting. \*\*Reminder by Prospector that we as a chapter have voted in the past to agree on only one charity event per year. Also tabled to next meeting.

**Committee Reports: 200 Club** by Frank currently 5 tickets left. Karen congrats to all involved is sales of all tickets. Band is 'All Shook Up' **Bozo Run** by Karen - continue collecting donations Price Is stated that Chopper needs letterhead for donated items.

Karen will look into that through the State office manager.

Possible to make up some type of packet, with flyers and letterhead for donations? **Toy Run** by Pete also will need door prizes

**Unfinished Business:** Roadblock issue is in federal court, stops are still happening, *please* contact Prospector if you or someone you know, has been stopped in a roadblock. Tickets have been ordered for the quilt raffle at the fair, tickets will be \$1 each. Jack reminds all on Wed. nite rides meet at Plaza Diner by 6pm.

**New Business: Nominations for chapter officer positions begin at the next chapter meeting.**

**Motion#25-09** to adjourn by Joel with second. Adjourned at 8:03pm

PAC collected \$42 tonight, thanks to all.

Minutes submitted by Karen, Chapter Pres

***We Thank You..***  
 To all that helped in the sales  
 and purchase of all 200 tickets!  
  
 Thanks to those involved in  
 The prep, cooking, and clean-up!  
  
***Save the Date for 2010***  
***Sat., August 14***

**Go ahead, BE A KID AGAIN, this year at the 2009 Columbia County Fair!**

Jam packed with entertainment and non-stop action, everyone's favorite end-of-summer pastime for six sensational days of excitement  
Wed Sept.2 through Mon., Sept. 7

**REMINDER Fair Booth Schedule**

Please Notice that there are still open time slots Also notice there are duplicate names in various time slots. Please contact Karen for volunteer time and entry ticket If desiring to help out at the booth. 518-392-7354

**Wed.** 2 – 6pm Tony Brahm & Karen  
6-10pm Pete & Bob M  
**Thur** 10am – 2 Ed & Marilee  
2pm – 6 Don & Judy  
6 – 10 pm Nola & Joel  
**Fri** 10am – 2Rick C. & Mike C.  
2pm- 6 Rick C. & Bob M.  
**6 –10pm OPEN**  
**Sat** 10 am – 2 Tom G & Joanna  
**2pm – 6 OPEN**  
6 – 10pm Phyllis & Pat M.  
**Sun** 10am – 2 Al A & Bob M.  
2pm – 6 Prospector & Zandra  
6 – 10pm Prospector, Mel & Lee  
**Mon** 10am – 2 Al & Zandra  
2pm- 6 Frank & Denise  
6 10pm Pete & Karen (toy Collection)

**'200 CLUB' August 8, 2009  
income/expense sheet**

200 Ticket @ \$50.00	\$10,000.00	
Donation:	<u>\$5.00</u>	
<b>INCOME</b>	<b>\$10,005.00</b>	
Prize Money	\$5,000.00	
Frank's Farm		400.00
Beer (Pitstop)		372.80
Meat (ClaverackFood Mart)		310.80
Band (All Shook Up)		300.00
Equipment Rental		300.00
Sam's Club		247.96
Williams Lumber (Gas)		73.31
Corn (Kesicke Farm)		64.00
Potatoes (Staron Farms)		55.00
Bob Dunn (Coleslaw)		39.54
Ice (Pitstop)		<u>19.42</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$7,182.83</b>	

**Total Profit to chapter \$2,822.17**

\*\*Port a john bill has not be received nor deducted from above

**"200 Club" Winners Aug. 8, 2009  
Congratulations & Thank you**

1 <sup>st</sup> Prize	Peter Shufelt	\$2,500.00
2 <sup>nd</sup> Prize	Sue Emanuele	\$1,000.00
3 <sup>rd</sup> Prize	Sharp Agency	\$500.00
4 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Melissa Finn	\$250.00
5 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Jackie & Angelo Salvatore	\$250.00
6 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Steve Hook & Cathy Staats	\$100.00
7 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Joe Kenneally	\$100.00
8 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Gerry Woods	\$100.00
9 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Kara Lansing	\$100.00
10 <sup>th</sup> Prize	Joyce Green	\$100.00

**\*\*The AMA (American Motorcycle Association)** announces longtime motorcyclist and rider safety coach Maggie McNally has been appointed to the AMA Board of Directors. McNally, who resides in Albany, N.Y., will represent individual members from the country's Northeast region on the AMA Board. McNally, whose appointment was approved at the Board's July 27 meeting, fills the vacancy when former Board member Joe Bromley joined the AMA director of racing. Her term expires in February 2011.

**The AMA, a frequent voice about the dangers to motorcyclists of**

distracted and inattentive driving (and riding), has issued a formal position statement from the association's board of directors. Meanwhile, the issue is gaining national attention following the publication of a New York Times article alleging that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration withheld distracted-driver data to avoid angering Congress. With that data public, Secretary of Transportation, Ray LaHood, has announced an upcoming summit on distracted driving to be held on Wednesday September 30 and Thursday, October 1, 2009. "Safety is our number one priority," said LaHood. "As we become a more mobile and wireless nation, we can't afford to ignore new technology's impact on roadway safety."

The distracted driving summit will bring together senior transportation officials, elected officials, safety advocates, law enforcement representatives, private sector representatives and academics to address a range of issues related to reducing accidents through enforcement, public awareness and education. Authoritative speakers from around the nation will lead interactive sessions on a number of key topics including the extent and impact of distracted driving, current research, regulations and best practices.

Participants will also examine distractions caused by current and planned automotive devices, such as navigational systems. The summit's second day will include a panel of state and local officials to discuss solutions from their perspectives. "This summit will not only bring leaders in transportation safety together to talk about this issue," said LaHood, "It will also give people from all over the country—and world—the opportunity to be a part of this historic dialogue."

To accommodate the strong response, the summit will be available live by webcast and members of the public will be given the opportunity to submit questions online for each individual panel discussion. The Department has also created a website to provide information and updates on the summit at: [http://www.rita.dot.gov/distracted\\_driving\\_summit/](http://www.rita.dot.gov/distracted_driving_summit/). (continue on pg 7)

30<sup>th</sup> Abate Toy Run-Columbia Chapter  
Sunday, October 4<sup>th</sup> 2009  
\$10 Donation or a new toy



To Benefit the  
Edith Casey Stocking Fund.

Community participation  
welcomed!

Refreshments served at the  
Chatham Firehouse 2 – 6pm

Line up 11AM  
Plaza Diner Route 9 Hudson  
Ride @ Noon

*Ride in remembrance... Michael Westover*

*\*Supporter \*Past member \*Brother \*Friend*

For more info call

Rick 518-537-4778

Pete 518-821-1219

Karen 518-755-0347

[www.geocities.com/columbiaabate](http://www.geocities.com/columbiaabate)

[columbiaabate@yahoo.com](mailto:columbiaabate@yahoo.com)

**2009 Columbia County Chapter****Meetings****Events**

White Stone Café 7 pm social hour at 6pm

<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>20 3 Annual Bozo Run</b>
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>4 Toy Run</b>
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<b>5</b>	
<b>DECEMBER</b>	<b>5</b>	Holiday get together combined w/ meeting

All event dates are subject to change. All chapter events and flyers can be found on the chapter website at [www.geocities.com/columbiaabate](http://www.geocities.com/columbiaabate) More events/flyers of other ABATE chapters and other motorcycle related events can be found on the ABATE of NY website at [www.abateny.org](http://www.abateny.org)

**Other 2009 Events of Interest**

\*\*All events are updated, as information is available.

- September 11-14 Catskill Mountain Thunder East Durham, NY 3 day event at the Blackthorne Resort. Bike shows w/\$1000's cash prizes, rodeo games, vendor expo, stunt shows, swap meet tent, fireworks, pig roast, live music day & nite, on-site camping, spaghetti wrestling, demo rides, guided and unguided tours, antique bike display, celebrity bike builders, used bike corral for anybody looking to buy or sell a bike. Aerial Burnouts Fri. & Sat. evenings, BBQ and party Thur. evening, and Fri. morning scenic breakfast run.
- 13 Longhairs Covered Bridge Ride Tilton, NH This event is a poker run for child abuse prevention. This is our 10th benefit ride so far. The registration fee is \$15.00 the poker sheet's are \$5.00 each. We stop at 5 covered bridge's through-out NH. We sell t-shirt's and long sleeve shirt's. We sold baby bib's last time. Contact Kathy Trefrey 603-943-5603 [www.myspace.com/bridgeride](http://www.myspace.com/bridgeride)
- 24-27 MRF "Meeting of the Minds" sponsored by ABATE of Minnesota [www.mrf.org](http://www.mrf.org)
- 30- October 3 Myrtle Beach Bike Rally SC **Some laws were passed in 2008 that are very non-rally and non-biker friendly, for instance you will get ticketed if your bike makes more than 87 decibels worth of noise.** [www.myrtlebeachbikeweek.com](http://www.myrtlebeachbikeweek.com)
- October 15-18 Biketoberfest, Daytona, FL. Biketoberfest has expanded beyond just the Daytona Beach are; notably Bruce Rossmeier's Harley Davidson now has all of the offerings that you would find at most rallies right on their huge property. Another new thing to note about this Florida rally is that **there is a new law prohibits having your license plate vertically mounted and also that requires both wheels on the ground.** Biketoberfest is one of the premier motorcycle rallies in the world and subsequently it will have all of top notch attractions. Many of the best custom bike builders show up with their latest creations and there are a number of great custom bike shows with elite competition in many categories. As with Dayton Beach Bike Week, there is tons of racing at the Daytona International Speedway during Biketoberfest. Additionally you will be able to see top name bands, motorcycle shows, demo rides, expos, celebrity appearances, endless vendors, charity rides, and all of the entertainment and attractions at the renowned area bars. [www.biketoberfest.org/](http://www.biketoberfest.org/)
- ??NY Safety Conference
- NOTICE GOAT BROTHERS SWAP MEET HAS BEEN CANCELED scheduled for Oct. 2009, in Saratoga Springs due to building construction.

(from pg 5)

*Originally published in the New York Times July, 21, 2009*

In 2003, researchers at a federal agency proposed a long-term study of 10,000 drivers to assess the safety risk posed by cellphone use behind the wheel. They sought the study based on evidence that such multitasking was a serious and growing threat on America's roadways. But such an ambitious study never happened. And the researchers' agency, the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, decided not to make public hundreds of pages of research and warnings about the use of phones by drivers — in part, officials say, because of concerns about angering Congress.

On Tuesday, the full body of research is being made public for the first time by two consumer advocacy groups, which filed a Freedom of Information Act lawsuit for the documents. The Center for Auto Safety and Public Citizen provided a copy to

The New York Times, which is publishing the documents on its Web site. In interviews, the officials who withheld the research offered their fullest explanation to date.

The former head of the highway safety agency said he was urged to withhold the research to avoid antagonizing members of Congress who had warned the agency to stick to its mission of gathering safety data but not to lobby states. Critics say that rationale and the failure of the Transportation Department, which oversees the highway agency, to more vigorously pursue distracted driving has cost lives and allowed to blossom a culture of behind-the-wheel multitasking. "We're looking at a problem that could be as bad as drunk driving, and the government has covered it up," said Clarence Ditlow, director of the Center for Auto Safe

The group petitioned for the information after The Los Angeles Times wrote about the research last year. Mother Jones later published additional details. The highway safety researchers estimated that cellphone use by drivers cause around 955 fatalities and 240,000

accidents over all in 2002. The researchers also shelved a draft letter they had prepared for Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta to send, warning states that hands-free laws might not solve the problem.

That letter said that hands-free headsets did not eliminate the serious accident risk. The reason: a cellphone conversation itself, not just holding the phone, takes drivers' focus off the road, studies showed. The research mirrors other studies about the dangers of multitasking behind the wheel. Research shows that motorists talking on a phone are four times as likely to crash as other drivers, and are as likely to cause an accident as someone with a .08 blood alcohol content. The three-person research team based the fatality and accident estimates on studies that quantified the risks of distracted driving, and an assumption that 6 percent of drivers were talking on the phone at a given time. That figure is roughly half what the Transportation Department assumes to be the case now.

More precise data does not exist because most police forces have not collected long-term data connecting cellphones to accidents. That is why the researchers called for the broader study with 10,000 or more drivers.

"We nevertheless have concluded that the use of cellphones while driving has contributed to an increasing number of crashes, injuries and fatalities," according to a "talking points" memo the researchers compiled in July 2003. It added: "We therefore recommend that the drivers not use wireless communication devices, including text messaging systems, when driving, except in an emergency."

Dr. Jeffrey Runge, then the head of the highway safety agency, said he grudgingly decided not to publish the Mineta letter and policy recommendation because of larger political considerations. At the time, Congress had warned the agency not to use its research to lobby states. Dr. Runge said transit officials told him he could jeopardize billions of dollars of its financing if Congress perceived the agency had crossed the line into lobbying.

The fate of the research was discussed during a high-level meeting at the transportation secretary's office. The meeting included Dr. Runge, several staff members with the highway safety agency and John Flaherty, Mr. Mineta's chief of staff. Mr. Flaherty recalls that the group decided not to publish the research because the data was too inconclusive. He recalled that Dr. Runge "indicated that the data was incomplete and there was going to be more research coming." He recalled summing up his position as, the agency "should make a decision as to whether they wanted to wait for more data." But Dr. Runge recalled feeling that the issue was dire and needed public attention. "I really wanted to send a letter to governors telling them not to give a pass to hands-free laws," said Dr. Runge, whose staff spent months preparing a binder of materials for their presentation.

His broader goal, he said, was to educate people about the dangers of distracted driving. "Based on the research, there was a possibility of this becoming a really big problem," he said. But "my advisers upstairs said we should not poke a finger in the eye of the appropriations committee," he recalled. He said Mr. Flaherty asked him, "Do we have enough evidence right now to not create enemies among all

the stakeholders?" Those stakeholders, Dr. Runge said, were the House Appropriations Committee and groups that might influence it, notably voters who multitask while driving and, to a much smaller degree, the cellphone industry. Mr. Mineta, who left as transportation secretary in 2006, said he was unaware of the meeting. "I don't think it ever got to my desk," he said of the research.

Mr. Ditlow, from the Center for Auto Safety, said the officials' explanations for withholding the research raised concerns. He said the research did not constitute lobbying of states. And he said it was consistent with the highway safety agency's research in other areas, like seat belts. Mr. Ditlow said that putting fears of the House panel ahead of public safety was an abdication of the agency's responsibility. "No public health and safety agency should allow its research to be suppressed for political reasons," he said. Doing so "will cause deaths and injuries on the highways."

State Senator Joe Simitian of California, who tried from 2001 to 2005 to pass a hands-free cellphone law over objections of the cellphone industry, said the unpublished research would have helped him convince his colleagues that cellphones cause serious — deadly — distraction. "Years went by when lives could have been saved," said Mr. Simitian, who in 2006 finally pushed through a hands-free law that took effect last year.

The highway safety agency, rather than commissioning a study with 10,000 drivers, handled one involving 100 cars. That study, done with the Virginia Tech Transportation Institute, placed cameras inside cars to monitor drivers for more than a year. It found that drivers using a hand-held device were at 1.3 times greater risk of a crash or near crash, and at three times the risk when dialing compared with other drivers.

Not all the research went unpublished. The safety agency put on its Web site an annotated bibliography of more than 150 scientific articles that showed how a cellphone conversation while driving taxes the brain's processing power. But the bibliography included only a list of the articles, not the one-page summaries of each one written by the researchers. Chris Monk, who researched the bibliography for 18 months, said the exclusion of the summaries took the teeth out of the findings. "It became almost laughable," Mr. Monk said. "What they wound up finally publishing was a stripped-out summary."

Mr. Monk and Mike Goodman, a division head at the safety agency who led the research project, theorize that the agency might have felt pressure from the cellphone industry. Mr. Goodman said the industry frequently checked in with him about the project and his progress. (He said the industry knew about the research because he had worked with it to gather some data). But he could offer no proof of the industry's influence. Mr. Flaherty said he was not contacted or influenced by the industry.

The agency's current policy is that people should not use cellphones while driving. Rae Tyson, a spokesman for the agency, said it did not, and would not, publish the researchers' fatality estimates because they were not definitive enough. He said the other research was compiled as background material for the agency, not for the public. "There is no report to publish," he said.



The group petitioned for the information after The Los Angeles Times wrote about the research last year. Mother Jones later published additional details. The highway safety researchers estimated that cellphone use by drivers caused around 955 fatalities and 240,000 accidents over all in 2002. The researchers also shelved a draft letter they had prepared for Transportation Secretary Norman Y. Mineta to send, warning states that hands-free laws might not solve the problem.

That letter said that hands-free headsets did not eliminate the serious accident risk. The reason: a cellphone conversation itself, not just holding the phone, takes drivers' focus off the road, studies showed. The research mirrors other studies about the dangers of multitasking behind the wheel. Research shows that motorists talking on a phone are four times as likely to crash as other drivers, and are as likely to cause an accident as someone with a .08 blood alcohol content. The three-person research team based the fatality and accident estimates on studies that quantified the risks of distracted driving, and an assumption that 6 percent of drivers were talking on the phone at a given time. That figure is roughly half what the Transportation Department assumes to be the case now.

More precise data does not exist because most police forces have not collected long-term data connecting cellphones to accidents. That is why the researchers called for the broader study with 10,000 or more drivers.

"We nevertheless have concluded that the use of cellphones while driving has contributed to an increasing number of crashes, injuries and fatalities," according to a "talking points" memo the researchers compiled in July 2003. It added: "We therefore recommend that the drivers not use wireless communication devices, including text messaging systems, when driving, except in an emergency."

Dr. Jeffrey Runge, then the head of the highway safety agency, said he grudgingly decided not to publish the Mineta letter and policy recommendation because of larger political considerations. At the time, Congress had warned the agency not to use its research to lobby states. Dr. Runge said transit officials told him he could jeopardize billions of dollars of its financing if Congress perceived the agency had crossed the line into lobbying.

The fate of the research was discussed during a high-level meeting at the transportation secretary's office. The meeting included Dr. Runge, several staff members with the highway safety agency and John Flaherty, Mr. Mineta's chief of staff. Mr. Flaherty recalls that the group decided not to publish the research because the data was too inconclusive. He recalled that Dr. Runge "indicated that the data was incomplete and there was going to be more research coming." He recalled summing up his position as, the agency "should make a decision as to whether they wanted to wait for more data." But Dr. Runge recalled feeling that the issue was dire and needed public attention. "I really wanted to send a letter to governors telling them not to give a pass to hands-free laws," said Dr. Runge, whose staff spent months preparing a binder of materials for their presentation.

His broader goal, he said, was to educate people about the dangers of distracted driving. "Based on the research, there was a possibility of this becoming a really big problem," he said. But "my advisers upstairs said we should not poke a finger in the eye of the appropriations committee,"

he recalled. He said Mr. Flaherty asked him, "Do we have enough evidence right now to not create enemies among all the stakeholders?" Those stakeholders, Dr. Runge said, were the House Appropriations Committee and groups that might influence it, notably voters who multitask while driving and, to a much smaller degree, the cellphone industry. Mr. Mineta, who left as transportation secretary in 2006, said he was unaware of the meeting. "I don't think it ever got to my desk," he said of the research.

Mr. Ditlow, from the Center for Auto Safety, said the officials' explanations for withholding the research raised concerns. He said the research did not constitute lobbying of states. And he said it was consistent with the highway safety agency's research in other areas, like seat belts. Mr. Ditlow said that putting fears of the House panel ahead of public safety was an abdication of the agency's responsibility. "No public health and safety agency should allow its research to be suppressed for political reasons," he said. Doing so "will cause deaths and injuries on the highways."

State Senator Joe Simitian of California, who tried from 2001 to 2005 to pass a hands-free cellphone law over objections of the cellphone industry, said the unpublished research would have helped him convince his colleagues that cellphones cause serious — deadly — distraction. "Years went by when lives could have been saved," said Mr. Simitian, who in 2006 finally pushed through a hands-free law that took effect last year.

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