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 **New Mexico Legislative Update 2014**

The following legislation, passed by the 2014 legislature and signed into law by New Mexico Governor Susana Martinez, may be of interest to the Traffic Safety community.

##### Transportation

**Passed -** **SB 19**, sponsored by Senator Peter Wirth and Representative Jim Smith, prohibits texting while driving, sending or reading text messages and emails, or making internet searches from smart phones or other hand-held wireless devices. Effective July 1, 2014, there will be a $25 fine for a first violation and $50 fine for subsequent violations. The bill has exceptions for situations such as summoning medical or other emergency aid.

Forty-one other states ban texting by all drivers. New Mexico already prohibits texting for teenage drivers with a learner's or provisional license.

##### Alcohol

**Passed - HB 16,** sponsored by Representative Carl Trujillo, this legislation increases the percentage of the liquor excise tax going to local DWI prevention programs for three years. Effective July 1, 2015, the distribution can only be used by the municipality for alcohol treatment and rehabilitation services.

**Bills that were not enacted during the 2014 session included ones to** legalize the recreational use of marijuana; require longer prison sentences for drunken drivers with four or more convictions; ban sales of electronic cigarettes to minors; toughen the requirements for ignition interlocks to be removed; and stop the state from issuing driver's licenses to illegal immigrants.