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Senator John Cowdery Anchorage

For Immediate Release: Feb. 5, 2003
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Drunk Drivers May Lose Dividend Check **Senate Bills 58 & 59 Aim to Make Alaska Streets Safer**

(JUNEAU) – If having the toughest drunk driving laws in the country is not enough to give someone pause before driving under the influence, losing your Permanent Fund Dividend check hopefully will.

That is precisely what Senate Transportation chairman, Sen. John Cowdery (R-Anchorage) is hoping for with the introduction of [Senate Bill 59](#) today. If passed SB 59 would allow for the forfeiture of PFD checks from any person who is convicted - or has been convicted within four years prior to the qualifying year – of driving under the influence of alcohol, inhalants or controlled substances. The new law would also apply to those individuals who refuse to submit to chemical testing.

“Despite having the toughest DUI laws in the country, drunk driving is still an epidemic in Alaska,” said Cowdery. “I hope that if all other reason fails a person who has been drinking, the they will weigh the cost of a cab ride against the potential of losing their dividend check.”

Cowdery says that he feels this legislation follows in the spirit of Gov. Murkowski’s call for Alaskans to get tough on crime.

“The state takes dividend checks for a multitude of reasons,” said Cowdery. “I think needlessly risking the lives of all Alaskans is a pretty darn good reason.”

Alas, driving under the influence is not the only worry people driving illegally on Alaska’s roads and highways need to take notice of. [Senate Bill 58](#), also introduced by Sen. Cowdery would, if passed, cost those convicted of driving without mandatory insurance coverage their dividend checks as well.

“Driving without insurance costs the people of Alaska millions of dollars a year in increased insurance premiums, as well as costs of accidents where one or more parties are uninsured,” said Cowdery. “I hope that people will realize just how serious we are about enforcing mandatory insurance for the protection of all Alaskans that utilize our road and highway system.”

Both bills will be heard first by the Senate Judiciary Committee followed by the Senate Finance Committee.

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