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TITLE: An Evaluation of the California Drunk Driving Countermeasure System: An Overview of Study Findings and Policy Implications

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FUNDING SOURCE: Office of Traffic Safety and National Highway Traffic Safety Administration

PROJECT OBJECTIVE:

To summarize the results and policy implications of seven-part study entitled An Evaluation of the Countermeasure System, a major federally funded California Drunk Driving

SUMMARY:

This report summarizes, and provides an overview of, a seven-part DUI study which pinpointed numerous deficiencies in California's DUI control system and concluded that license suspension is generally more effective than alcohol rehabilitation programs in reducing the accident risk of DUI offenders. The results suggest that using both sanctions simultaneously would be superior to either alone. An evaluation of pre and post-1982 rates indicated that the tougher sanctions and illegal per se BAC statutes (0.10%) enacted in 1982 reduced the incidence of alcohol-related accidents and DUI recidivism. Key recommendations include enactment of an administrative per se suspension statute and mandatory suspension of both first and repeat offenders, and police authority to utilize pre-arrest breath screening instruments. A detailed description of the elements of a proposed improved DUI control system is also included in the report.

IMPLEMENTATION STATUS OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

The recommendation to develop a DUI management information system was pursued through a federally-funded grant project, and the establishment of such a system was legislatively mandated by AB 757 (Friedman), effective 1/1/90. Administrative per se license suspension was enacted by SB 1623 (Lockyer), effective 7/1/90. California traffic police are currently using pre-arrest alcohol screening (PAS) devices.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

See Perrine, Report #89; Sadler and Perrine, Report #90; Tashima and Peck, Report #95; Sadler, Report #96; Helander, Report #97; and Arstein-Kerslake, Report #104.