



2026 – 05

## THE NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOCIATION SUPPORTS A NATIONAL 0.05 BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION (BAC) LIMIT

**WHEREAS**, the National Sheriffs' Association (NSA), representing the elected Sheriffs of the United States and their deputies, is committed to protecting the safety and well-being of communities across the nation; and

**WHEREAS**, alcoholimpaired driving remains- a leading cause of preventable roadway deaths in the United States, resulting in thousands of fatalities and placing significant burdens on law enforcement, emergency responders, and local governments; and<sup>123</sup>

**WHEREAS**, rural counties, patrolled primarily by Sheriffs' Offices, experience disproportionately higher rates of fatal and serious-injury crashes due to longer emergency response times, higher travel speeds, limited roadway lighting, and greater distances to trauma care; and<sup>456</sup>

**WHEREAS**, Sheriffs across the country routinely respond to alcohol-related collisions on urban and rural roadways that could have been prevented through stronger deterrence and clearer legal standards; and<sup>7</sup>

**WHEREAS**, extensive research from national and international traffic-safety organizations demonstrates that lowering the blood alcohol concentration (BAC) limit for drivers from 0.08 to 0.05 reduces impaired-driving crashes, injuries, and fatalities; and<sup>8</sup>

**WHEREAS**, approximately 55 countries—including Australia, France, Germany, and nearly all of Europe—have adopted a 0.05 BAC standard and experienced measurable improvements in roadway safety; and<sup>9</sup>

**WHEREAS**, Utah's adoption of a 0.05 BAC per se in 2018 resulted in reductions in fatal crashes without negative impacts on tourism, hospitality, or economic activity, demonstrating that stronger safety standards can be implemented without harming local economies; and<sup>1011</sup>  
**WHEREAS**, Sheriffs' Offices nationwide face significant jail-cost impacts from alcohol-related arrests, including booking, medical clearance, supervision, and transportation expenses, and

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1 National Transportation Safety Board. Reaching Zero: Actions to Eliminate Alcohol-Impaired Driving. NTSB Safety Report, 2013.

2 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Countermeasures That Work: A Highway Safety Countermeasure Guide for State Highway Safety Offices.

3 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Traffic Safety Facts: Alcohol-Impaired Driving.

4 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). Rural/Urban Comparison of Traffic Fatalities.

5 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Motor Vehicle Safety in Rural Areas.

6 Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Rural Road Safety Facts.

7 OECD / International Transport Forum. Road Safety Annual Report.

8 World Health Organization (WHO). Global Status Report on Road Safety.

9 European Transport Safety Council (ETSC). Drunk Driving: Towards Zero Tolerance.

10 National Highway Traffic Safety Admin (NHTSA). Utah's .05 BAC Per Se Law: Evaluation of the Effects on Alcohol-Impaired Driving.

11 Utah Department of Public Safety. Highway Safety Office Annual Report.

reducing impaired-driving incidents would help alleviate these burdens on county detention systems; and<sup>121314</sup>

**WHEREAS**, a national shift to a 0.05 BAC per se would provide Sheriffs and deputies with a more effective tool to deter and prevent impaired driving before it results in serious injury or loss of life, particularly in rural jurisdictions where the consequences of impaired driving are often most severe; and<sup>15</sup>

**WHEREAS**, many public safety and traffic experts along with the following entities recommend a 0.05 BAC limit as an evidence-based strategy to reduce impaired driving and save lives including:

- American Automobile Association (AAA)
- American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators (AAMVA)
- American Medical Association (AMA)
- Governors Highway Safety Association (GHSA)
- Mothers Against Drunk Drivers (MADD)
- National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA)
- National Safety Council (NSC)
- National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB)

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, the National Sheriffs' Association supports the adoption of a 0.05 BAC per se limit for operating a motor vehicle in all U.S. states and territories;

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the National Sheriffs' Association urges Congress and state and territorial legislatures to enact legislation establishing the 0.05 BAC standard as a critical public safety- measure within their jurisdictional areas;<sup>16</sup>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the Association supports national and state-level public-education campaigns, law-enforcement training, and community partnerships to ensure effective implementation of the 0.05 BAC standard;<sup>17</sup>

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, this resolution be transmitted to federal and state policymakers, national traffic-safety organizations, and law-enforcement partners to demonstrate the unified support of America's Sheriffs for stronger impaired-driving prevention measures.

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<sup>12</sup> Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). Sheriffs' Offices and Jail Operations Reports.

<sup>13</sup> National Institute of Justice (NIJ). The Cost of Alcohol-Related Crime.

<sup>14</sup> National Association of Counties (NACo). County Jails and the Cost of Alcohol-Related Offenses.

<sup>15</sup> PLOS ONE. Evaluation of Utah's .05 BAC Law.

<sup>16</sup> The Benefits of Lowering the BAC Limit for Driving from .08 to 0.05

<sup>17</sup> Estimation of the Potential Effectiveness of Lowering the Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) Limit for Driving from .08 to .05 grams per deciliter in the United States