

Utah to adopt toughest DUI measure

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Utah will adopt the nation's strictest drunken-driving law under a measure signed Thursday night by Gov. Gary Herbert.

The legislation lowers the standard from the current 0.08 percent blood alcohol content—used nationwide—to 0.05 percent. The drop means someone could be considered legally too drunk to drive after as little as a single strong drink, depending on their weight and tolerance.

"We're not asking for Prohibition," Herbert said during a news conference Thursday. "We're hoping people take this as a cautionary note."

The proposal has divided the tourist-dependent state, and Herbert said he'll call a special legislative session later this summer to hash out additional details, including the exact implementation date.

Some critics have urged Utah to delay rolling out the standard until other states act. The law takes effect at the end of 2018.

The National Transportation Safety Board backs the new Utah law and recommends all states adopt the 0.05 percent standard, if not lower, arguing that stricter laws could save nearly 1,800 lives a year.

About 10,000 people die in alcohol-related accidents on U.S. roads annually, the NTSB said. Utah was the first state to adopt the nation's current 0.08 percent standard in 1983, and safety advocates say the Beehive State should once again lead by example.