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March 25, 2013

Oregon Legislature  
Senate Committee on Business and Transportation  
900 Court Street NE, Rm. 453  
Salem, OR 97301

Re: SB 742

Dear Chair Beyer and Members of the Committee,

The Bicycle Transportation Alliance would like to commend the committee for concern over the health and safety of people who ride bikes in Oregon. As an organization, we encourage helmet use by all people riding bicycles. We also know that bicycling is, in itself, not a dangerous activity, no more or less so than playing basketball on a hard surface or diving into a swimming pool.

The BTA is opposed to SB 742, which requires any person under 18 years of age to wear protective headgear while operating or riding on bicycle, riding on skateboard or scooter or using in-line skates or roller skates, on public or private land.

Current Oregon law allows people who are 16 years old to obtain a driver's license. If they are ready to make that decision, we believe they are ready to make the decision to wear a helmet.

We believe strongly that the two best ways to increase safety on the roads for people who bike are 1) make the roads safer by slowing traffic down and creating safe protected bike lanes and 2) provide effective education for all users but most specifically focused on middle school students.

We consider education to be the most effective way to get people to wear helmets. The BTA provides in-school bike safety education in 4<sup>th</sup> through 7<sup>th</sup> grade as part of our Safe Routes to Schools programming. Unfortunately, requests to the Oregon Department of Transportation for funding Safe Routes to School programs far outnumber the available funds. We encourage the Legislature to look at increasing support for Safe Routes to School to promote safety.

Our focus should be on making our roads safer for everyone through infrastructure improvements, reducing auto speeds, and reducing distracted driving.



In the context of any mandatory helmet law, funding should be provided to ensure helmets are available to low-income communities to ensure that this proposed bill doesn't prevent people from making an affordable and physically active choice for getting around.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Gerik Kransky". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Gerik Kransky  
Advocacy Director

