

To: Senate Committee on Judiciary

From: Brian Edwards  
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Re: SB 694, motorcycle lane sharing

The document is intended to provide support for SB 694. As a long-time motorcyclist and citizen of the great state of Oregon, I believe that passage of this bill will benefit both Oregon's motorcycling community and the general public more broadly.

In addition, it will allow me as a Team Oregon instructor to teach new riders how to filter through traffic in a safe manner. As it is now, I simply tell students to avoid lane splitting/filtering, providing limited value. Please note that I am not authorized to speak on behalf of Team Oregon. I am here as an individual stating my personal opinion. My views are my own and do not represent those of Team Oregon.

Prior to moving to Oregon in 1994, I lived in California where I grew up. I started riding motorcycles off road as a youth and bought my first street bike when I was 16. Since lane splitting is legal in California, I have extensive first-hand experience.

Following graduation from college, my wife and I purchased a house in Riverside and then I landed a good job in Costa Mesa. This involved a 45 mile commute each way through some of the most congested highways in the country. I commuted via motorcycle and engaged in lane splitting for much of the trip every day. In all, I logged some 60,000 miles along this route.

Based on this experience, I have a number of observations:

1. Lane splitting on a motorcycle is safe. Throughout the course of my long commute and many other trips throughout the LA area that involved lane splitting, I had no incidents of any kind. There is plenty of room between cars for motorcycles to pass, and as a rider it is easy to see when drivers are about to change lanes.
2. Lane splitting reduces congestion. For my long commute, if lane splitting were not an option, I most likely would have driven my car since there would be no benefit to taking the motorcycle. As it was, I along with all the other people on motorcycles helped to remove cars from the road and lessen congestion. The same effect will happen here when SB 694 is approved.
3. Car drivers become more aware of motorcycles. Car drivers can easily see lane splitting motorcycles approaching in their side-view mirrors and many move over to accommodate riders. Compared to Oregon, California drivers are much more accustomed to the presence of motorcycles which significantly improves rider safety.

In my professional life, I am a public relations consultant. Currently, in my analysis, most drivers are not aware of the safety and other benefits of lane filtering. Therefore, assuming this bill passes, I believe it should be accompanied by a public education program. Such a program should build the perception that lane filtering improves safety by reducing the risk of rear-end collisions for riders, and that it will also reduce congestion on the highways thereby improving commutes for everyone.

In addition, those of us within motorcycling community will do our part to ensure that riders understand the controls established by SB 694 and practice lane filtering in a safe and responsible manner. As a motorcycle safety instructor, I am confident that we can effectively teach new riders how to safely and responsibly practice lane filtering.

Thank you for your time and I hope that this committee will push this measure forward on behalf of Oregon and its citizens.