

04/01/2015

Portland, OR

To,

Senate Judiciary Committee Members

Subject: Senate Bill 694-1

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am a day-to-day rider who has been safely riding motorcycles since 1988. About four to five years ago, I had attended a public hearing that was held by the committee at one of our local churches in Portland. Hundreds of motorcyclists of different walks of life attended this meeting and an overwhelming number of them requested the legalization of lane-splitting/ sharing by motorcyclists. That was not approved at that time. Your citizens did not seem to give up, as this must have seemed important enough for them to raise their voice and bring this to your attention again and again. Sorry to waste your time, but I feel the need to talk to you about this as this is a measure that could save a lot of lives.

In today world of texting and cell phone use, a shocking number of people do not pay attention to traffic, especially at signals and turns. The same set of people also have given up the use of turn signals. This seems to be the case even when they are not on the phone, which I assume is a product of the habit of them not using turn signals while they are on the phone and driving.

The result of such behavior is an increase in fender/ benders accidents, people being rear-ended or being hit by cars that suddenly changed lanes. It is easy to observe these when you are on a motorcycle as you are generally sitting higher than in a car, making you more aware of the same and more defensive in your riding.

Please consider this: What happens to a motorcyclist when he/ she gets rear-ended, for example while at a signal? You are like Hamburger meat that gets squashed between two buns. This is no fun. I'd rather be the fries at stay safely on the side, making it home safely. This is exactly what splitting/ sharing the lanes can accomplish.

As a motorcyclist, I am a big believer of making sure that the person in the vehicle next to me has made a visual note of my presence. This I accomplish many times by getting in their visual range while I am in the lane next to them. I believe that once a driver observes you he/she is more aware and will make a point of using their signals, etc while changing lanes. These safety practices are some of the things I have used all these years and am happy to say has led to ZERO incidents in the last 16 years of riding in Portland. This is also what splitting/ sharing the lanes can accomplish, by allowing the rider to become more visible to the neighboring vehicle.

Finally sitting on a motorcycle in a traffic situation can become really tiring as our engines get too hot, tending to make a rider more uncomfortable. An uncomfortable rider is also an unsafe rider.

You have the power to make it safe for all of us. I sincerely hope you see the wisdom in making this happen and pass SB694-1.

Regards,

Naveen Mundanda.