

To: House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
From: Don Mason (Albany, Oregon)
Date: March 30, 2015

Subject: In support of SB 533

To the members of the Committee – thank you for hearing SB 533 today. My name is Don Mason and I have been riding motorcycles in one form or another for approximately 35 years. In that time I have had occasions whereby electronic traffic control devices have failed to detect the presence of my motorcycle for whatever technical reason. Although it is uncommon, it does and will continue to occur at times.

Our training as riders teaches us to keep keenly aware of our surroundings, other vehicles passing in proximity, etc such that we can react quickly to danger. However, under current Oregon law there is no exception in these circumstances except to take our eyes off the wider environment and to begin rolling our motorcycle forward/back/left/right in an effort to trigger the signal detection method in use at that signal. There is often a diamond-shaped mark in the pavement or a line that gives clues as to where to position the motorcycle for best probability for detection. Most of the time, we can indeed trigger the detection in most cases.

Sometimes, none of the “tricks” work and the rider is faced with choosing between:

- A) proceeding anyway
- B) making a right turn (if possible) and back-tracking from another direction
- C) or, if already in the left turn lane – rolling the bike back and then entering the lane to the right to either proceed though or to turn right.

In my years of riding, I have used all of the above scenarios and was even “waved” through a light by law enforcement who was watching me faced with the issue.

SB 533 is not a new method for motorcycle to bypass any existing normal circumstances. It is merely a legal exception for a licensed and experienced rider to proceed ONLY when absolutely prudent to do so, and only after exceptional efforts have been exhausted. SB 533 has no fiscal impact and can even save a rider’s life were a car driver not to notice the rider’s presence (as does also happen.)

I urge you to vote to pass SB 533 through your committee and thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully,

Don Mason
Albany, Oregon