

2015-05-14

Dear Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development,

As an avid motorcyclist, I write to urge you to vote in favor of Senate Bill 694, which would legalize lane sharing (aka lane-splitting or filtering) for motorcycles and mopeds during times of congestion.

Lane-sharing has long been accepted and encouraged as a common sense practice the world over as a means of reducing traffic. Allowing motorcycles to use the empty space between the lanes not only lets them get where they're going faster but, since they are removed from the flow of traffic, reduces traffic for everyone else as well. Lane-sharing effectively increases the number of available lanes on a given roadway, for free, to the benefit of all users. And the positive effects of reducing traffic are obvious from an economic and environmental standpoint.

Another important aspect of lane-sharing is that it gives the motorcyclist an alternative to being a sitting duck in stop-and-go traffic, waiting to be rear-ended by that SUV that has been tailgating them for the last couple of miles who, as cars are beginning to slam on their brakes a quarter-mile ahead, is busy shaving and eating a cheeseburger and yelling at his kids in the back seat. There is mounting research showing that not only are there fewer MC-involved accidents in areas that allow lane-sharing (which is, essentially, everywhere but here) and that those that do occur are much less severe. This bill gives riders a much-needed tool to help manage the risk that comes with riding in traffic.

Also along the lines of rider safety: many motorcycles are air-cooled, as are motorcyclists. Sitting on the freeway on a hot day between two semi trucks, wearing head-to-toe protective gear with a searing engine between your legs is uncomfortable at best. Unless they keep moving, riders face heat exhaustion and overheated equipment.

Finally, a critical note. The clause limiting the practice of lane-sharing to roads having posted speeds of greater than 50 miles per hour is ill-conceived and misguided. It disallows lane-sharing where it could have some of the greatest benefits: in gridlocked sidestreet and suburb traffic, where roads are often wide enough to drive a whole car between the lanes, much less a vehicle that is just over shoulder-width. We should be making better use of that space.

That said, this bill is an excellent start toward reducing congestion, improving rider safety and encouraging motorcycling in our state, so I ask for your support.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Hudock', written in a cursive style.

Andy Hudock  
Lafayette, OR