



Oregon State University
**College of Public Health
and Human Sciences**

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DATE: 2/20/2019
TO: Senator Lew Frederick
FROM: Team Oregon Motorcycle Safety Program
RE: Position on Lane Splitting Legislation in Oregon

Position

Team Oregon Motorcycle Safety Program is neutral on the concept of limited lane splitting in Oregon, a practice that would allow motorcycle and moped operators to travel between adjacent lanes of traffic moving in the same direction under certain conditions.

After review of motorcycle lane splitting and filtering research, interactions with riders familiar with the practice, and interviews with California law enforcement, there is no clear evidence that limited lane splitting would be a benefit or detriment to public safety.

Discussion

Lane splitting, as legally practiced in California and under certain conditions (at 50 mph or less; speed differential of 15 mph or less), does not appear to create undue risk. It should be noted, driving culture in California is unique, making the California lesson less translatable to other states.

Further, lane splitting evolved in California and other countries organically, over a 50-year period. There is little data or research available to inform lawmakers of the roadway safety and societal acceptance of “flipping a switch.” Oregon, as with any state considering lane splitting, faces a certain level of unpredictability in choosing to legalize lane splitting.

Concerns

Team Oregon’s neutrality rests on three conditions:

1. Funding is made available for curriculum revision, design, printing, and training of instructors. Currently, the practice of lane splitting is inconsistent with some foundational Team Oregon principles that encourage riders to use all of their lane to see and be seen, create a space cushion, maintain an escape route, and avoid surface hazards. This contradiction has to be reconciled.

2. Outreach and education is made available for affected groups:

- a. Riders at large. While Team Oregon can train 8,000-12,000 riders a year in the principles and rules of safe lane splitting, there are 274,000 endorsed riders in Oregon who will also need to be educated.



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b. Drivers at large. There likely will be a period of “growing pains” as riders and drivers become accustomed to the new paradigm. To limit fatalities, injuries, and property damage stemming from legalized lane splitting, this transition will have to be managed through a robust public information and education campaign.

c. Law enforcement community. In preliminary talks about lane splitting, representatives of Oregon’s traffic enforcement professionals voiced concerns about the enforceability of a lane-splitting law. These concerns need to be allayed.

3. Clear parameters regarding “limited” lane splitting are set and defined. These parameters should take into account maximum speeds at which lane splitting is allowed, as well as a maximum allowable differential speed between a motorcycle/moped operator and the adjacent vehicles.

Conclusion

Provided the three conditions above can be addressed adequately, Team Oregon will remain neutral on proposed legislation – neither in support of or opposed.