

Dear non-delinquent legislators: I'm a constituent living in Washington County requesting your vote in favor of a bill important to me and other Oregonians who are trying to reduce our contributions to climate change and traffic congestion.

SB 998 makes law conform to reality, allowing bicyclists to treat stop signs as yield signs — slow down at stop signs, carefully check for traffic or pedestrians coming from either direction, and then proceed without coming to a total stop. Maintaining momentum is really important to making a bike ride enjoyable rather than a total sweaty slog (and in my case putting a strain on my tendinitis-plagued knees).

A lot of people who might choose to bike for a short trip to the library or gym or grocery store — the majority of car trips today — are discouraged by several seemingly small but practically difficult obstacles, and this is a really big one, making the difference for people who aren't in their 20s and in perfect physical condition.

It also removes a possible means of harassment of African American and other minority cyclists by law enforcement agencies. Although sporadically enforced today, because failure to totally stop is technically illegal, current law raises the possibility of racially disproportionate enforcement of the kind cited by minority representatives in East Portland.

Idaho and other jurisdictions that have implemented “stop-as-yield” have experienced no increase in collisions, and an uptick in people choosing to use bicycles, and therefore driving less (and exercising more, which is good for everyone). After all, we bicyclists have the greatest incentive to proceed carefully through any intersection -- our lives are at stake. More info on why SB 998 is a pro-safety bill is at <https://www.bicyclelaw.com/its-time-to-greenlight-stop-as-yield/>

I'm sure thousands of car trips would be avoided if these bills become law. They'd help to reduce our use of cars, give us more choices about transportation, save Oregon money (fewer car trips = lower road maintenance costs), and help Oregon keep its commitment to a carbon neutral future.

Thanks for listening and staying on the job for Oregon, and keep up the good work.

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