

Submitter: Thomas Iversen
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB422

2/23/2023

Hello ladies and gentlemen of the Oregon Legislature.

This is my 3rd or 4th letter to all of you in the last 6 to 8 years in support of SB 422, allowing motorcycles to travel safely between lanes on freeways when traffic stops. It is counterintuitive, so it does not seem like the safest thing to do by the average citizen of Oregon. Most people assume it to be more dangerous. The science and data that focuses on the issue, however, tell us that it is in fact, safer. The Berkeley study says it is safer (yes safer... Full stop) as long as the motorcyclist is traveling at 50 MPH or less, and traveling at no more than 15 MPH faster than the surrounding traffic. This bill makes us safer. Fewer motorcyclists will die. There may be a scraped forearm, or a busted mirror, but that is better than a dead motorcyclist.

ODOT will testify (I assume, because they have done so every year this has been in front of you) That this is a bad idea, and they are looking out for the safety of all the motorcyclists in Oregon. Please do not believe them. They are telling you that sharing lanes is more dangerous, when the data says it is safer. Why would they do this? The only reason I can imagine is that they are concerned about what will happen if this bill is a success? What if it means that a road doesn't have to be expanded because a larger percentage of people are riding motorcycles, and not causing traffic?

As I ride my motorcycle around Portland, I can not tell you how many drivers I see on their phones, on the console screen on their dash, or doing other things that are totally distracting them. I know that I have grabbed my phone to send a message about running late when I am stuck in traffic (I am not going fast, what can the harm be?). Heading home on Highway 26 eastbound every night, it is not uncommon to see people pulled to the side of the road exchanging information because someone ran into someone else. I did this commute for a couple of months last year, and I can only remember 1 or 2 days where that did not happen. On many days it happened more than once. Thankfully there was no motorcyclist being struck from behind. That is usually a fatal accident.

Please do what our last legislature did, and pass this bill. Even if it only saves one or two lives, it would be worth it.

Sincerely,
Thomas Ifversen