

February 28th, 2023

Letter in Support of 2023 Oregon SB422

Dear Sir or Madame,

I am writing this letter in support of SB422: "Allows motorcycle rider to travel between lanes of traffic under certain conditions." I have been riding motorcycles since 1985, and have been a resident of Oregon almost my entire life. I take motorcycle safety courses to continue to improve my knowledge and skills, and am also a motorcycle safety instructor. I not only have been riding motorcycles for a long time, but I work continually to be a better motorcycle rider, and to pass on those skills to others.

Not only have I been a long time rider of motorcycles, but I have also personally experienced legal lane splitting. I support 2023 Oregon SB422 precisely because I have seen with my own eyes that safe and legal lane splitting does work - and works well. Drivers quickly adapt to looking for motorcycles lane splitting during rush hour, and will move to the edge of their lane to give riders plenty of room - even out of state drivers who have only briefly been in a state with legal lane splitting laws. Motorcycle riders who choose to legally lane split understand the law, and the importance of safety, and are equal partners in making lane splitting a safe practice.

Getting motorcycles out of the center of a lane during heavy traffic conditions not only reduces the amount of space a motorcycle takes up (which is about the same as a car, when the bike is centered in the lane) which aids in reducing traffic congestion, but it greatly reduces the chance of a rear end collision to the motorcycle rider from a distracted and inattentive driver behind them. While a rear end "fender bender" is an annoyance to four-wheel and larger traffic, it can be fatal for a motorcycle rider as the bike twists and falls and puts the rider (and possibly a pillion passenger) under the wheels of moving traffic. Studies have shown that a slow speed sideswipe collision to a lane splitting motorcycle is far more survivable than a motorcycle being struck from behind at 25 mph in heavy traffic. There are a myriad of reasons why lane splitting is beneficial for all concerned, but I choose to highlight the aspect that I think is of greatest importance to me in an era where traffic fatalities continue to climb.

California has long been the poster child for safe and legal lane splitting. Other states have taken their own steps to legalize some form of legal lane splitting and/or lane filtering. Utah, Montana, Arizona and Hawaii have all passed laws allowing legal lane splitting and/or lane filtering. Oregon's SB422, should it become law, would have its own stipulations on what is allowed behavior. I believe that Oregon motorists, including motorcycle riders, are able to quickly adapt to new traffic laws and would adapt to this one as well. I have read the bill, and I support it. I urge you to support it as well.

Sincerely,

Hung James Wasson
Hillsboro, Oregon