

13 May 2015

Chair McKeown and Members of the House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development:

My name is Patrick Leyschock. As a long-time motorcyclist, and former member of Oregon's Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety, I support Senate Bill 694, regarding motorcycle lane-filtering.

This bill can meaningfully impact the lives of commuting Oregonians. I live in NE Portland and last year worked in Hillsboro. Commuting on my motorcycle, I spent on average 90 minutes a day stuck in stop-and-go traffic. Had lane-filtering been legal -- as proposed in SB694 -- that commute time would have been cut in half, giving me more time to spend at home with family. Auto commuters would benefit from the bill as well, since lane-filtering effectively removes motorcycles from the traffic queue. *We all* benefit through reduced fuel consumption and idle time. The congestion and fuel-efficiency benefits of lane-filtering, for both automobiles and motorcycles, are documented in this 2012 study:

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/motoring/motorbikes/9272532/Why-commuting-by-motorcycle-is-good-for-everyone.html>

There are safety concerns. However, motorcyclists don't want to be involved in accidents any more than auto drivers (even more so, I'd argue, since we are already without seat belts, bumpers, crumple zones, etc.) Please note that SB694 limits lane-filtering motorcycles to a maximum speed of 20 mph, and permits lane-filtering only when automobiles are traveling 10 mph or less. These are school-zone speeds.

These low speeds reduce the likelihood of an incident. I am sure you have been stuck in heavy traffic in your car. Changing lanes in those conditions is a slow, concentration-intensive activity: constantly checking your rearview and looking over your shoulder, wondering, "will that driver let me in?" Commuters driving in such conditions will be alert to lane-filtering riders on their motorcycles with (mandatory) headlights. Motorcyclists ride defensively out of necessity, so will be alert to motorists.

Finally, please note the findings from the 2014 study commissioned by the State of California. The study shows that should an accident occur, lane-filtering motorcyclists are actually significantly less likely to be injured than those who are not lane-filtering. The study is available online here: <http://www.ots.ca.gov/pdf/Publications/LaneSplittingReport.pdf>. This result may seem counterintuitive at first, but the data shows the safety benefits of lane-filtering; by removing motorcycles from the "pinch point" between car bumpers in stop-and-go traffic, riders are less vulnerable to significant injuries.

Should the bill pass, there will be an adjustment period, but coupled with a public-relations campaign, the transition could be smooth. A successful precedent for this transition has already been set in Oregon, regarding bicycles. Like bicycles, motorcycles are an alternative, efficient transportation mode sharing the road with automobiles.