

Brian Edwards
11650 NW Damascus St.
Portland, OR 9722
(503) 863-2002

May 14, 2015

Representative Caddy McKeown
Chair, House Committee on Transportation and Economic Development
Oregon State Capitol, H-476
900 Court Street N.E.
Salem, Oregon 97301

Re: SB 694A, motorcycle lane filtering

Dear Chair McKeown and Members of the Committee:

As a long-time motorcyclist and citizen of Oregon, I believe that passage of this bill will benefit both Oregon's motorcycling community and, more broadly, the general public. I am a life-long motorcyclist and a former motorcycle safety instructor for Team Oregon, the official motorcycle safety training program for the state. I hold a degree in journalism and have worked in the field of public relations for over 25 years. I am currently self-employed as a PR consultant and have a strong list of clients, including Oregon silicon forest founding companies Tektronix and ESI.

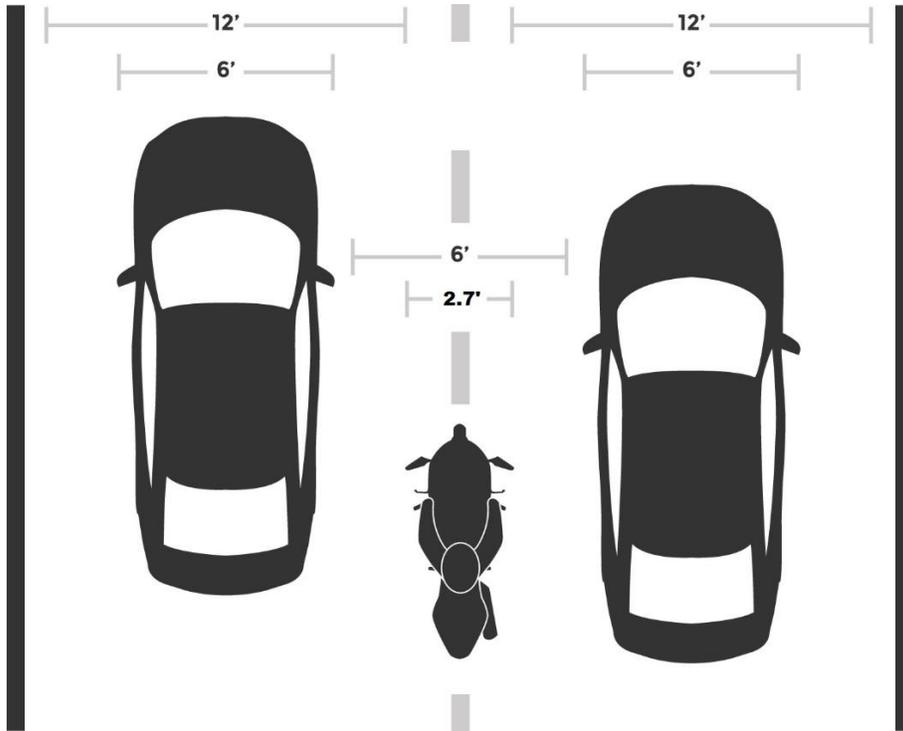
Prior to moving to Oregon in 1994, I lived in California where I grew up. I started riding motorcycles off road as a youth and bought my first street bike when I was 16. Since lane splitting is legal in California, I have extensive first-hand experience with it.

Following graduation from college, my wife and I purchased a house in Riverside as it was all I could afford at the time. Since my job was in Costa Mesa, I needed to make a 45-mile commute each way through some of the most congested highways in the country. I opted to commute most days via motorcycle and engaged in lane splitting and lane filtering for much of the trip on a regular basis. In all, I logged some 60,000 miles along this route.

Based on this experience, I have a number of observations:

1. Lane splitting/filtering on a motorcycle is safe. Throughout the course of my long commute and many other trips throughout the LA area that involved lane splitting, I had no incidents of any kind.
2. Lane splitting reduces congestion. For my long commute, if lane splitting were not an option, I most likely would have driven my car since there would be no benefit to taking the motorcycle. As it was, I along with all the other people on motorcycles helped to remove cars from the road and lessen congestion. The same effect will happen here if SB 694A is approved.
3. Car drivers become more aware of motorcycles. Car drivers can easily see lane-splitting motorcycles approaching in their side-view mirrors and many move over to accommodate riders. Compared to Oregon, California drivers are much more accustomed to the presence of motorcycles which significantly improves rider safety more broadly.

Lane filtering as defined in SB 694A is consistent with Team Oregon instruction. In particular, it provides motorcyclists with an “escape route” when other options have been eliminated by stop-and-go traffic situations. One of the principles Team Oregon teaches students is to always scan for an “escape route.” This typically involves changing lanes should problems occur in front or behind the rider. SB 694A would allow riders to take advantage of the approximately 6 feet of space between cars (the average width of a motorcycle is 32-in.) as shown in the illustration below.



As this illustration shows, lane filtering allows a motorcycle to use the approximately 6 feet of space between vehicles. This is space that currently goes to waste in Oregon. Given the \$20 million per mile cost of building highways, this is a valuable public resource that should be more fully utilized.

Team Oregon is one of the premier motorcycle safety organizations in the country and has an excellent and highly professional group of instructors. I am highly confident that these instructors would be able to teach riders of all abilities the principles of safe lane filtering. This in turn will make these riders safer and ultimately reduce injuries and even save lives.

Following the passage of SB 694A in the Senate, I along with others in the motorcycling community were able to successfully communicate the benefits of the bill to influential news outlets including Joseph Rose, transportation reporter for the Oregonian/Oregonlive, and KOIN 6 news. Both stories focused on the role lane filtering can play in reducing congesting and improving safety. In a reader poll conducted by the Oregonian, more than 78% of respondents were in favor of lane filtering.

Should SB 694A pass and be signed into law, those of us within motorcycling community will do our part to ensure that riders understand the controls established by SB 694A. This will include work with the media as well as through social media channels, including Facebook and YouTube. Such an effort has proven to be effective in New South Wales, which legalized lane filtering starting July 1, 2014. For more information, please watch this short video showing news coverage following passage of this lane filtering legislation in Australia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8oWmulSXP2w>

In conclusion, I strongly urge the Committee to recommend passage of SB 694A.

Best regards,

Brian Edwards

brian@edwardsoregon.com

(503) 863-2002