

To whom this may concern,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 998, which would allow cyclists to treat stop signs and flashing red signals as yields. This change in the Oregon Vehicle Code makes sense, not just for cyclists in a hurry, but for the safety of all road users.

Granted, 814.400 (Application of vehicle laws to bicycles) states that "every person riding a bicycle upon a public way is subject to the provisions applicable to and has the same rights and duties as the driver of any other vehicle concerning operating on highways..." But there are exceptions: except (a) Those provisions which by their very nature can have no application.

This is one of those situations. When traffic engineers decide to control an intersection with stop sign(s), the calculations used are based on the assumption that a driver of a motor vehicle will be sitting quite a distance from where s/he can see oncoming traffic, because of the length of the hood of a typical automobile from - the 1950s and 60s! And that they will have the windows rolled up and the radio playing (Bluetooth stereo nowadays).

A bicyclist sitting upright is able to see and hear approaching traffic much better than that driver from the 1950s, and is better able to judge whether it is safer to stop, or continue through the intersection at a moderate speed.

This helps all road users, as no driver likes to have to stop twice at a stop sign: once for the person stopped in front, and a second time for when it's his or her turn. A bicyclist "cruising through" safely is out of the next driver's way much sooner.

Please pass this long needed change in the vehicle code that basically decriminalizes a behavior that has been tolerated safely for decades.

Thank you

Michael Ronkin

Former ODOT Pedestrian and Bicyclist Program Manager (1989 - 2007)



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