

**From:** [Mary Pritchard](#)  
**To:** [JCT Exhibits](#)  
**Subject:** cyclist in favor of HB 2682  
**Date:** Monday, March 25, 2019 1:04:02 PM

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Joint Commission of Transportation:

My name is Mary Pritchard and I reside at 1330 Greenmeadows Way, Ashland, OR, 97520. I am writing to express my support of HB 2682 which would allow for the amendment of ORS 801.155, definition of bicycle lane, to explicitly provide that the bicycle lane "continues in and through intersection where markings are interrupted by intersection." I have been a cyclist for over 60 years and have spent many of those years commuting by bicycle. I find most bicycle lanes to be inherently dangerous. Because we are relegated to the side and not really perceived as part of "traffic", motorists just don't see us. Driving my bicycle in a bicycle lane requires extremely well-developed defensive driving skills and there are occasions when even that may not be sufficient to avoid a collision. The "right hook" type of scenario the current traffic law allows is very terrifying to cyclists. It is not uncommon for motorists to under-estimate the speed at which a cyclist is traveling. The motorist will pass the cyclist in the bike lane thinking, if he or she even sees the cyclist, that there is ample time to pass and turn right when, in fact, there isn't time and the cyclist ends up crashing into the car. If lucky, there's only minor injury but, as the case in Bend in 2017 illustrates, it can result in a fatality and, per the current law, the motorist who caused the accident is not held liable. This has to end. I think this type of collision could be avoided if the law were amended such that, when a cyclist approaches an intersection in the bicycle lane, the cyclist be allowed to exit the bicycle lane, if safe to do so, and occupy the adjacent motor vehicle lane of traffic until through the intersection at which time the cyclist could then safely merge back into the bicycle lane.

The inability of motorists to "see" cyclists is one danger bicycle lanes pose. Another is that they often aren't wide enough to allow ample maneuverability when encountering debris and hazards in the form of rocks and gravel, broken glass, branches, drains, metal grids, etc. that are all too frequently found in bicycle lanes and that make driving in them very dangerous. Another danger that I often encounter is traveling in a bicycle lane adjacent to parked cars. I have had very close calls with motor vehicle occupants abruptly opening their doors right in front of me or pulling out of their parking space right in front of me. I once had to grab the door handle of a vehicle to stay upright and avoid crashing to the ground. I believe that when traveling in a bicycle lane adjacent to parked cars, the cyclist should be allowed to enter the traffic lane adjacent to the bicycle lane if it can be done safely and the cyclist does not impede the flow of traffic. Currently, if I were to do that, I would receive a ticket because if a bicycle lane exists, then I must use it. It is cyclists who are in the best position to determine when using a bicycle lane poses a hazard. Their assessment should be honored and accepted and they should not be ticketed for exiting a bicycle lane under these circumstances. Neither the police person nor traffic judge have the same vantage point and perception that the cyclist has. There have been occasions where my fellow cyclists have been ticketed for leaving a bicycle lane that they determined to be hazardous and the court wrongly sided with the police person and not the cyclist.

I am grateful for bicycle lanes that are safe and sufficiently wide but I think the circumstances under which I am mandated to use them are too restrictive and force me to either receive a traffic ticket or potentially put myself in harm's way. I would welcome a more thorough review of the laws which apply to the use of bicycle lanes. I very much appreciate the work done thus far and fully support HB 2682.

Sincerely,  
Mary Pritchard