

I am writing to respectfully request your support of SB574. This is the third, and hopefully final time, the motorcycle community of Oregon is pushing for the passage of this bill. With each year, more information comes to light that supports the findings that lane splitting at low speeds is SAFER for motorcyclists (and ultimately surrounding vehicles). When done properly, lane splitting is a life saving option for motorcyclists. With the supporting information and the ever increasing traffic issues within our cities, now is the time to pass this bill.

As a motorcyclist that first learned to ride in California, I have firsthand experience with the safer riding conditions afforded to me with the option to lane split at low speeds. This option was especially important to me as a rider that wears full protective gear during the warm summer months. Sitting on hot pavement in 90 degree heat is a dangerous situation; allowing me to move slowly through traffic keeps both myself and my bike from overheating. Furthermore, the avoidance of being rear-ended by a distracted driver is a lifesaving option. My husband has firsthand experience with being hit from behind and pushed into the stopped car in front of him. Thankfully, he was able to walk away from this accident. If he had the option to safely lane split and continue traveling through the stopped vehicles, this accident would have been avoided.

There has been opposition to the bill because of the change in traffic patterns that will occur, with motorists potentially being unaware that lane splitting is now legal. As with many things in life, we all quickly learn and adapt to changing situations. This should include when new traffic patterns or traffic laws come into effect. As licensed drivers, we have a responsibility to be informed of current traffic laws. It is the responsibility of ODOT to put together an effective public service announcement making sure motorists and motorcyclists are aware of the new traffic laws. This should not be a barrier to passing this bill.

Thank you for consideration of my testimony and your support of this bill,

Jessica Bernardini