

Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation in Support of SB 574
David W. Peterson

Co-Chair Senator Beyer, Representative McLain, Co-Vice Chair Senator Boquist Co-Vice Chair Representative Noble and Members:

I respectfully request your support of SB 574. To me, motorcycle safety is of paramount importance. So much so that I sat with the Governor's Advisory Committee for nine years (2008-2016), chairing the Committee for five years (2010-2014).

As you think about whether Oregon should adopt the practice of lane-sharing, I ask you to consider the findings of the Safe Transportation Research & Education Center at the University of California Berkeley. It issued a 2015 report entitled "Motorcycle Lane-splitting and Safety in California." California is the only state where lane-sharing is legal. The study was the largest motorcycle crash study ever conducted in the U.S. It was the first to focus on lane-sharing. It was commissioned by California's Office of Traffic Safety, an agency similar to ODOT's Transportation Safety Division. The California Highway Patrol collected the study's data. The report was provided to the California legislature to inform its decision to write the informal practice of lane-sharing into law, which it did in 2016.

The study reviewed 6,000 motorcycle crashes. Nearly 1,000 motorcyclists were lane-sharing at the time. The lane-sharers had better attributes than the non-lane-sharers:

- They wore more protective helmets
- They were travelling at lower speeds
- They were less often under the influence of alcohol
- They were less likely to suffer a severe or fatal injury.

The study found that both traffic speed and motorcycle speed differential were important in predicting the occurrence of injury. But no meaningful increase in injury incidence occurred until traffic speed exceeded 50 miles per hour. Furthermore, speed differentials of up to 15 miles per hour were not associated with changes in injury occurrence.

SB 574 allows lane sharing only when traffic speed is 10 miles per hour or less and the motorcyclist may travel no faster than 10 miles per hour faster than traffic. Both are well below the safety limits of the study. California legislators found this data compelling. I hope you do too.

Thank you.