

SB 422 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Joint Committee On Transportation

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Meeting Dates: 5/11

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Allows motorcycle and moped operators to travel between lanes of traffic under certain circumstances.

HOUSE VOTE: 27-2

Minimal Fiscal Impact

Indeterminate Revenue Impact

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The practice of "lane splitting" or "lane filtering" refer to how motorcycles can navigate slow or stopped traffic on multi-lane roads. Lane splitting generally refers to a motorcycle passing slower or stopped vehicles by proceeding between the lanes of travel, while lane filtering usually refers to cases where a motorcycle moves back and forth between lanes to pass stopped or slowed vehicles. Both practices are meant to allow motorcycles to continue moving when the general flow of traffic is slowed or stopped, and are meant to prevent overheating of motorcycle engines, rider fatigue, and protect the safety of riders by preventing them from being rear-ended in areas with high levels of traffic congestion.

Currently, only California explicitly allows lane splitting, while four other states allow some form of lane filtering. California allows motorcycles to travel between lanes at speeds up to 10 miles per hour higher than the surrounding traffic, provided that traffic is moving at 30 miles per hour or less; both Utah and Arizona allow lane filtering when all traffic is stopped on roads with speed limits of 45 or less, and the cyclist is limited to moving at no more than 15 miles per hour; Montana permits lane filtering when surrounding traffic is moving at 10 miles per hour or less, provided that the cyclist does not exceed the speed of surrounding traffic by more than 10 miles per hour; and Hawaii allows riding on the road shoulder (at up to 10 miles per hour) but does not allow lane splitting. A number of other states do not explicitly prohibit lane splitting.

The Legislative Assembly passed Senate Bill 574 in 2021, which would have created a conditional exception to the violation of unlawful passing by motorcycles and mopeds in a lane to allow lane splitting in certain circumstances; however, that measure was vetoed by the Governor.

Senate Bill 442 A creates a conditional exemption to the violation of unlawful passing in a lane by a motorcycle or moped when traffic is moving at 10 miles per hour or less and the cyclist travels at no more than 10 miles per hour faster than the speed of surrounding traffic. The measure increases the penalty from a Class B violation to a Class A violation. The exemption applies only to interstate highways and roads with a designated speed of at least 50 miles per hour with two or more lanes of travel in a single direction. The practice remains prohibited in school zones, work zones, or on the road shoulder.