

Submitter: Ben Buswell
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary
Measure: SB422

SB 422 testimony

Hello,

I am writing to request that you support SB 574. I am a motorcyclist, born in Oregon, living in Portland, and I ride for both pleasure and commuting. Lane sharing would greatly increase my safety on our freeways. A few years ago, I was hit on I84 while riding by an aggressive driver "lane jumping" into what he perceived to be a gap in the traffic. Even at the relatively low speeds of congested traffic my bike was totaled and I was left with road rash and scars even while wearing proper gear. If lane sharing had been legal at this time I would not have been in a "no man's land" between two larger vehicles and most likely would not have been hit. Lane sharing would have allowed me to better position myself in the flow of traffic and avoid becoming invisible to less than attentive drivers- a subset of drivers that will always exist.

I have used responsible lane sharing techniques while visiting friends in the Los Angeles area and have found the practice widely accepted and expected. In California, where lane sharing is legal, there does not seem to be the sense of unfairness that I have anecdotally heard of here. I believe that once lane sharing is legalized in Oregon, drivers will accept it as part of the way our highways function. Meaning, motorcyclists won't be "getting away with something" anymore- lane sharing will be just another way our citizens get around.

Like bicycles, or buses, motorcycles are different than cars. Each type of vehicle has its capabilities and limitations- both as a machine and in relation to the law and infrastructure. Most Oregonians choose four-wheels for their mode of transport. Those of us who choose two (or ride two due to low cost of ownership or environmental concerns) have a right to the same consideration of our safety that those who choose cars or bicycles or tiny Smart cars do. Meaning- motorcycling is perceived as dangerous, and it is in some respects, but to use its inherent risks relative to cars as a reason to deny safer laws for motorcyclists is inequitable as it does not recognize societies responsibility toward safety for all- for example consider what Oregon cities are doing for bicyclists. Encouraging two-wheel vehicle use is good for the environment (the mpg difference is remarkable), supportive of those with less money to put toward vehicle ownership and has the potential to help solve many of our urban areas' traffic congestion issues without investing in more infrastructure (There are studies on this which I am sure have been passed to you by others).

I want to thank you for listening to my testimony and I hope that you will support SB 422 and see it into law.

Thank you.
Ben Buswell