

Submitter: Yuichiro Yagi
On Behalf Of:
Committee: Joint Committee On Transportation
Measure: SB422

I am a motorcycle rider and advocate. I am here today to urge you to support the lane sharing bill that would allow motorcyclists to ride between lanes of stopped or slow-moving traffic on highways.

Lane sharing is a safe and effective way for motorcyclists to avoid being rear ended by distracted or impatient drivers, especially in congested traffic situations. Lane sharing also reduces traffic congestion, fuel consumption, and emissions by allowing motorcyclists to use the space between lanes that would otherwise be wasted.

Lane sharing is not a new or radical idea. It is already legal and widely practiced in many countries around the world, including most of Europe, Australia, Japan, and Canada. It is also legal in California, where studies have shown that lane sharing reduces the rate and severity of motorcycle crashes.

I have personally experienced being rear-ended on my motorcycle because we do not have this capability to lane split. Last year, I was riding my motorcycle to get on HWY 26 during rush hour. I was the 2-lane on-ramp with stop and go traffic. Each driver/rider was waiting for their turn to be allowed on the highway. I was in the left lane and positioned myself to the right side of the lane. I did this because, in the event I were to be impacted I would not be squished between two vehicles. Even with that safety move in mind, I was rear ended by a Chevy Avalanche truck with a big bumper guard. The driver claimed he was avoiding the car behind him from hitting him. The car in question was a tiny car, and it made no sense as to why the driver still rear-ended me. Personally, I believe he was on his phone or had an issue with motorcycle riders because he rammed into me while both lanes of traffic were practically stopped.

There has been testimony made last year, that riders can be safe by staying closer to the side of the lanes, but this did not keep me safe. I was still rear ended, luckily with no injuries, and I was wearing full gear. Had a bill like SB 422 passed, this could have been easily avoided, by allowing me to filter through traffic instead of being vulnerable to those not paying attention behind me.

If lane sharing had been legal and accepted in Oregon, I could have avoided this accident and saved myself and the driver a lot of trouble and expense. I am not alone in this experience. Many motorcyclists have been rear ended or sideswiped by careless drivers who do not see them or respect their space on the road. Today's drivers have many distractions. I've witnessed it first-hand while riding and driving.

Drivers are using their phones, texting, watching movies, putting on make-up, eating, reading books, driving impaired, etc. As a motorcycle rider, we do not have time to do these other activities.

That is why I urge you to pass the lane sharing bill and make Oregon a safer and more motorcycle-friendly state. Lane sharing is not about giving motorcyclists special privileges or endangering other road users. It is about giving motorcyclists the option to use their own judgment and skill to protect themselves and reduce traffic congestion.

Thank you for your time and attention.