

The Honorable Andrew Maynard
The Honorable Antonio Guerrero
Co-Chairpersons, Transportation Committee
Legislative Office Building
Hartford, CT 06106-1591

February 8, 2013

Dear Chairmen Maynard and Guerrero:

I ride 6000-7000 miles per year, mostly on Connecticut Roads. I've been hit by cars twice, both times the driver was ticketed on the spot. And I actively promote cycling as both an alternative to driving and for recreational activities.

The majority of the cycling community does not support proposed bill No. 103, LCO No. 531, AN ACT REQUIRING BICYCLISTS TO RIDE SINGLE FILE ON A PUBLIC ROAD.

The proposed bill states that it is required as a safety measure, "in order to permit motorists to safely pass and yield three feet to the bicyclists as required by law". This is already addressed in current law (Sec. 14-286b) which states that cyclists may not ride two abreast if/when impeding motor vehicle traffic.

This is not a safety issue, but an issue of education (for both motor vehicle drivers and cyclists) and enforcement (citations for cyclists impeding traffic while riding two abreast). As far as safety is concerned, there is absolutely no factual evidence (DOT motor vehicle accident database) that cyclists riding two abreast have been involved in any collisions with motor vehicles (cyclists always lose when involved with a motor vehicle).

Connecticut has miles and miles of roads with minimal traffic and miles with very wide shoulders where cyclists can ride two abreast and still not impede traffic. Under SB103, this would be illegal.

Cycling in a "paceline" would no longer be legal under SB103, because as the lead riders tire, they move to the left and allow others to pass while they drop to the back of the pack. This is a continuous process. No different than migrating geese where the lead goose has to overcome the wind resistance, tires quickly and then has to drop back and allow another goose to lead.

If the current law is not being enforced, is there reason to believe that a new more restrictive law would be enforced?

By way of comparison, cyclists have been hit by cars "turning right on red" (this author included). A new law is not created eliminating right turn on red completely because a few motorists did not follow existing law. So why in the case of SB103, where there is no factual evidence of risk of injury to the cyclist, is this new proposed law being pursued?

Cyclists should not be riding two abreast on busy roads. Current law states that it is illegal to impede traffic riding two abreast. So, please enforce the existing law and don't create new law that will definitely have unintended consequences.

Respectfully

Charles Beristain, West Hartford.

Founding member of Bike Walk Connecticut, Member Connecticut Bicycle and Pedestrian Advisory Board, Member West Hartford Bicycle Advisory Committee, Member New Britain Bicycle Advisory Committee, Member New England Mountain Biking Association (NEMBA), Member International Mountain Biking Association (IMBA)