

To: Connecticut General Assembly, Transportation Committee
Re: Bill SB502 An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety and Transportation Options
From: Elizabeth Emery-Middletown, CT contact at ctladycyclist@gmail.com

I am writing in support of SB502. I use my bicycle for transportation, to and from work—a 13 mile trip each way—and for recreational riding when time allows. As well I serve on my towns Complete Streets Committee, and am a League of American Bicyclists Certified Bicycling Instructor, teaching safe cycling skills classes a few times a year.

- 1) I am not familiar with why statutes were put in place to forbid certain types of bicycle facilities, and would like to understand more about this. But in general the greater the options, the more the state can do to accommodate cycling as a means of transportation. As long as the law, and it's interpretation is in fact proven to be safe, and not a gimmick that portends to be safe, then let CT law allow for growth and innovation. (Not all 2 way bike lanes and cycle tracks are as safe as contractors would have us believe them to be.)
- 2) This language is critical, and really needs to be clearly defined. **A cyclist safety is in jeopardy when they ride too far to the right**, this happens in part because of the interpretation of the language of the law and in part because the cyclist does not understand what their rights on the road actually are, or how to use defensive cycling skills. The "right hook" is a very common bicycle accident that can be prevented and I use this as an example of why getting the language right matters. The web link below takes advantage of technology with both a visual and verbal description, of the "right hook." I encourage you to visit the site, <http://cyclingsavvy.org/2013/09/smart-moves-video-preventing-right-hooks/> and "see" for yourself why the clarification of this language is so important to cyclists safety, and driver understanding. What is not said in this particular video, that I'd like to elaborate on is, that if the rider in the video was all the way to the right—almost right up against the curb—the rider would be less visible to the motorists, would have less room/time to apply the brakes and try to stop, and have no room to the right to move to for an evasive move when it became clear they were being "right hooked."

Cyclists may use full lane is important not only when the lane is too narrow to safely share, it is important also when riding in urban traffic, and in being able to position themselves on the road and in the lane to be seen by traffic, as well as drive-out traffic. **The lane may be wide enough to share, but it is not always safe to share side by side. A cyclist needs the legal right to TAKE THE LANE and control the lane for the wellbeing of the cyclist and the motorist**, as the video so aptly expresses.

- 3) I urge caution in changing the language on passing slow moving vehicles; yes, I understand the intent and why this is being considered but please consider the following situation—which I've personally had happen twice and boy is it scary—regarding what happens on a two lane road when there are slow moving vehicles on both sides of the road in question and a vehicle passes a slow moving one when climbing *up a hill*, and in the opposing lane a cyclist is going *down the same hill* at 30-40 miles an hour, (who has taken the lane, to be seen and safe on that downhill), and now has a motor vehicle headed straight for them at 50 miles an hour in an attempt to pass said slow moving vehicle. It is easy for a driver to see a car in the opposite lane,

not always so easy to see the cyclist in the opposite lane (and drivers are not used to looking for them). This type of crash no doubt would be deadly for the cyclist, please don't create a law who's wording creates more opportunity for this type of potential deadly accident to occur.

- 4) Updating the CTDOT highway design manual to incorporate CT's complete streets statutory requirements, just makes good sense, and needs no further explanation, it speaks for itself.
- 5) Funding! Funding! Funding! Funding for Bicycle Infrastructure investments like all funding for transportation is one of the biggest issues facing the state. I hope that obtaining funding for bicycling infrastructure is viewed as funding for transportation. Bicycling for many is used as a means of transit, not just as a recreational pursuit. Other states have found significant funding opportunities for their bicycling infrastructure, because they are able to leverage more funding by the way the law allows for federal transportation dollars to filter through a state DOT. CTDOT's process is more cumbersome than many other states where a higher percentage of federal transportation dollars goes towards and reaches "alternative transiting modes." I think a lot of research can and should be done, on how other states are working on leveraging federal transportation dollars. Thru are MPO the state should have a full list of shovel ready projects in the pipeline so that more bicycle infrastructure investments can happen when Federal funds present. The state and cities should always keep in mind that infrastructure can be as simple as paint on the road for sharrows and/or markings for wide bike lanes that will keep the cyclists out of the door zone and other road signage; infrastructure for bicycling does not have to be a big ticket item. I believe the number one funding priority written into any legislation should be provisions for bicyclists and pedestrian on all bridge projects—new or rebuilding of old ones, and funding available to complete the project on either side of a bridge, so that the communities are not expected to fund more than 20% of the completion.

Thank for the opportunity to provide this written testimony. And thanks to Senator Bye, and Representatives McCarthy Vahey and Lamar for their work on improving cycling in CT. I wish I could be there in person, but cannot take the time from work this week. If you have any questions or needed clarifications on my testimony you can contact me at 860-984-6178.