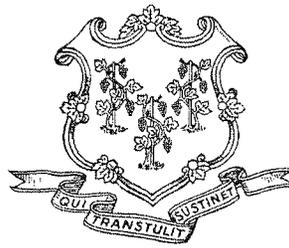


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State of Connecticut

SENATE

February 11, 2015

Chair
Appropriations Committee

Vice Chair
Childrens Committee

Member
Education Committee
Judiciary Committee
Legislative Management Committee

**Testimony to the Joint Committee on Transportation
SB 502 An Act Concerning Bicycle Safety And Transportation Options**

Senator Maynard, Representative Guerrera, Senator Leone, Representative, Arce, Senator Boucher, Representative O'Dea, and members of the Transportation Committee:

My name is Beth Bye, State Senator representing the 5th District Towns of West Hartford, Farmington, Burlington, and Bloomfield.

I am here to testify in support of SB 502. The goal of this bill is to improve safety conditions for bicyclists in the state of Connecticut. I worked on complete streets legislation in 2010 and worked for five years to pass the Vulnerable User bill.

I regularly commute to the Capitol on my bike, and I personally understand the benefits and the hazards of riding with so few protected bike lanes.

The bill before you today was not totally in the best shape when submitted. We have since met with advocates and want to emphasize important items to include in a 2015 bicycle bill.

The Governor has emphasized the importance of expanding transportation infrastructure. Connecticut will benefit from legislation that considers cycling in these infrastructure investments and that envisions a Connecticut with multi-modal transportation options for its residents. There are proven economic development benefits, and young people, say bike-able communities, are more desirable.

Some examples of infrastructure investments are:

- Former Representative David McCluskey's 2007 bill, HB 6374, to complete Connecticut's section of the East Coast Greenway
- Building a bike share program in Connecticut
- Creating a pilot program for complete streets and recreational trails.

The Governor's transportation proposals may include other improvement concepts. Bicycle advocates will have critical inputs once the plan is released.

Proposals for SB 502

1) Allow For Two-Way Bike Lanes on One Side of the Road

These types of two-way roadways are common in Europe, and are evolving in parts of the United States, including Boston, New York, Oregon, Colorado, and Washington. The city of Seattle has implemented a model protected bike lanes program with roadways that combine "the user experience of a multi-use trail with a conventional bike lane," merging two road-way models that share common elements. For further information on this model, please visit www.seattle.gov/transportation.

2) Fix Statutory Confusion About Ride to the Right

When roads do not have dedicated bike lanes, they present a particular hazard for bicyclists who need to hug the right edge of the road. There is a contradiction in the statutes about the need for bicyclists to stay as far right as possible; versus the right for bicyclists to take the whole lane to feel safe on roads. Connecticut needs to clarify this contradiction and allow for bikes to ride as far right 'as judged safe by the bicyclist'. This clarification is an important change for Connecticut and would amend the current language, 'as far right as practicable'.

3) Slow Moving Vehicle Changes For Bicycles

The state law, which enforces the passing of a motor vehicle three feet around a slow moving vehicle, has created a dilemma for some drivers who are confused as to whether they may cross the double yellow line when travelling behind a bicycle. Section 14-234 Determination of no-passing zones, indicates that drivers may not pass a slow moving, even if sight distance enables this to be done in a safe manner. Colorado statute 42-4-1005 (4) and (d), Maine statute Title 29-A Subchapter 1-A, Mississippi statute 63-3-1309, Ohio statute 4511.31, Pennsylvania §3307, Utah statute 41-6a-708, and Wisconsin statute 346.09 all have provisions for such exceptions. The Connecticut statutes need to be amended to state that when passing a pedestrian, bicycle, tractor, or other slow moving vehicle, the operator of a vehicle may drive on the left side of the center of a roadway in a no-passing zone when such movement can be made in safety and without interfering with or endangering other traffic on the highway.

4) Complete Streets and Design Manual

The complete streets bill was passed in Connecticut in October of 2009, yet the design manual has not been updated to reflect the necessary changes. It is important to move forward with amending the design manual in order to assure

bicycle transportation options for Connecticut commuters by January 2016. We still don't see the effects of the complete streets legislation on new roads.

The Committee on Transportation is a critical partner in improving the safety of bicyclists and promoting cycling as a viable transport option in the state. I ask the Committee to draft a bill that will amend the state statutes to:

1. Encourage innovative bicycle infrastructure
2. Clarify that bicyclists do not need to hug the right edge of the road but that bicyclists may ride as far right "as judged safe by the bicyclist"
3. Clarify the statutes 14-232, 14-233, and 14-234 to allow a motor vehicle to cross the double yellow line in a no passing zone when passing a slow moving vehicle, such a bicycle.
4. Update the Department of Transportation design manual to incorporate Connecticut's complete streets statutory requirements by June 30, 2016

I appreciate the opportunity to speak on behalf of this important bill, and I am open to any questions the members might have.

Thank you.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Beth Bye". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Beth Bye