

LETTER OF TESTIMONY

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VOTE FOR HB 920 - Motorcycles - Overtaking and Passing Vehicles

Dear Environment and Transportation Committee,

I write to urge you to vote in favor of HB 920 – Motorcycles - Overtaking and Passing Vehicles

The pros to lane splitting/filtering:

More efficient traffic flow. Example: Twenty vehicles are waiting at a stop light and only 18 are going to get through when it turns green. Because of this proposed law change, more Marylanders will consider opting to ride. At the example light, imagine if two of the 20 vehicles are motorcycles. With filtering, those two motorcycles move between the cars to align with the cars nearest the light. Now all the waiting traffic advances before the light changes to red. Multiply this benefit by the thousands of traffic lights across Maryland, and it's easy to imagine how overall traffic flow improves.

Road construction can be rescheduled. Improved traffic flow helps push out the time for new road construction.

Emissions reduction. By keeping traffic moving, emissions and fossil fuel consumption are reduced. Additionally, HB920 would facilitate increased use of some of the lowest emissions vehicles available. By encouraging more to ride vs. driving single occupancy cars, everyone benefits.

It helps motorcyclists. For those still operating air-cooled bikes, it certainly helps to keep moving. It also helps reduce the chances for rear-end accidents while waiting at traffic lights.

Taxes and fee collections increase. Motorcycle sales and accessories go up, and boost sales tax and MVA fees: In the Mid-Atlantic area, anyone who owns a motorcycle likely also owns a car. Purchases of motorcycles as “second” vehicles

just adds to the State's coffers. The more bikes sold the better, as it keeps the industry vibrant, along with good paying sales/service jobs.

More awareness = greater safety = fewer accidents. More riders will be encouraged to ride for more months of the year, leading to less of a seasonal drop off of awareness by cars and trucks. Note the signs the SHA puts out every spring to be alert to motorcycles. There would be more year-round riding because motorcyclists would ride more to take advantage of the shorter commute times that come with lane splitting/filtering.

The cons:

None that I can think of.

Other thoughts:

Current beliefs are that lane splitting/filtering is dangerous, largely based on the small percentage of motorcyclists who don't currently follow the laws. The vast majority are actually responsible and safe. Restricting the liberties of the majority doesn't alter the actions of the few.

A phased-in approach, where there is adequate marketing and training, would allow for safe integration.

Some may argue that roadway lanes aren't wide enough. Motorcyclists who have large full bagger and expensive motorcycles aren't going to risk damage by splitting/filtering if there isn't enough room between the cars, thus reducing the risk of unintended contact with cars.

Thank you for your consideration. I hope you will vote in favor of HB 920.

Sincerely,

Kyle Foss