



# TRI-COUNTY BICYCLE ASSOCIATION

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September 12, 2016

Michigan Senate Judiciary Committee  
PO Box 30036  
Lansing, MI 48909-7536

Dear Senate Judiciary Committee members:

The Tri-County Bicycle Association (TCBA) wholeheartedly supports the bicycle safety package before your committee. We strongly urge you to vote in favor of SB1029, SB1030, SB1076, SB1077, and SB1078. This package of legislation protects vulnerable roadway users, creates clear standards for how to safely pass a bicyclist, and improves driver's education in Michigan by putting a great emphasis on bicycle safety.

TCBA, formed in 1972, serves over 900 members, the majority of whom live in Eaton, Ingham, and Clinton Counties. We sponsor a number of organized rides, most notably the DALMAC tour (which was started in 1971 by former State Representative Dick Allen). The Association also works with local governments and businesses to create a safe bicycling environment. Finally, we host the local Ride of Silence in Mid-May and local memorial rides for bicyclists who have been killed or injured.

We support the package of legislation because Michigan lags behind other states in protecting bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users. In 2015 bicycle fatalities in Michigan increased a startling 57%. Sadly, 2016 is on track to be even more tragic, with 18 bicycle fatalities as of August 31. By supporting these bills, this committee is in the unique position to prevent future senseless tragedies.

That starts by improving driver's education. Michigan does not spend adequate time teaching new drivers about bicyclist's rights and how to safely share the road. As more Michigan communities adopt and implement Complete Streets policies, more and more bicycle lanes and other dedicated bicycle infrastructure are being installed across the state.

This makes it more important than ever to educate drivers on how to safely interact with cyclists on our changing roads. Failing to include bicycle safety in Michigan's driver's education curriculum endangers the lives of all roadway users. Dedicating a specific amount of time will help to alleviate confusion among motorists and reduce common crashes.

One of the most common types of bicycle/auto crashes involve collisions where a motor vehicle strikes a bicyclist while attempting to pass when traveling in the same direction. The Office of Highway Safety and Planning reports that 55% of bicyclists involved in crashes in 2015 were "going straight ahead" prior to the crash. Creating clearer guidelines for how motorists should interact with cyclists on the roads is essential. A five feet passing standard is the minimum distance sufficient to ensure safe passing and to help prevent a driver from striking a cyclist if the cyclist were to fall in the travel lane. Michigan is one of only eleven states without a law specifically requiring motorists to pass bicyclists safely.

Lastly, Michigan law already has enhanced penalties for drivers who injure or kill construction workers, children in designated school zones, and operators of slow-moving farm vehicles. It is time to recognize bicyclists, pedestrians, and wheelchair users as inherently vulnerable roadway users and give them similar protections. Pedestrians and bicyclists made up 21% of all roadway fatalities in 2015, a disproportionately high number considering they only accounted for 1.42% of all traffic crashes. Enhanced penalties will further increase the standard of care for drivers around non-motorized roadway users.

TCBA is very encouraged at the extensive public support for these bills and the wide bipartisan support among the legislature. Thank you in advance for your leadership in supporting these common sense bills.

Sincerely,

Patrick Kelley  
President