



January 21, 2022

Delegate David A. LaRock  
Chairman, House Transportation, Highway Safety and Policy Subcommittee  
Pocahontas Building, Room E409  
900 E. Main Street  
Richmond, VA 23219

RE: Support for House Bill 838

Dear Chairman LaRock and members of the Transportation Highway Safety Subcommittee:

Founded in 1924, the American Motorcyclist Association is the premier advocate of the motorcycling community. We represent the interests of millions of on- and off-highway motorcyclists. Our mission is to promote the motorcycling lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling.

The AMA fully supports H.B. 838 and requests the committee endorse its passage.

The AMA places significant emphasis on motorcycle operator and passenger safety. On every type of public roadway, motorcyclists encounter challenges from other roadway users and must be constantly vigilant to potentially unsafe conditions around them.

One of the most dangerous situations for any on-highway motorcyclist is being caught in congested traffic, where stop-and-go vehicles, distracted and inattentive vehicle operators and environmental conditions pose an increased risk of physical contact with another vehicle or hazard. Even minor contact under such conditions can be disastrous for motorcyclists. Allowing motorcyclists to move between stopped or slowed traffic prevents them from becoming victims of a rear-end collision.

Del. Tony Wilt introduced H.B. 838, which will authorize motorcyclists to lane filter under certain circumstances. Operators of a two-wheel motorcycle would be able to pass another vehicle that is stopped or traveling at no more than 10 mph in the same lane, or if there are two lanes of travel in the same direction, as long as the motorcyclist did not exceed 20 mph and can execute such a maneuver safely.

The Motorcycle Lane-splitting and Safety in California Study, conducted by the Safe Transportation Research and Education Center at the University of California, Berkley, and cited in the literature review in this report mentions that lane-splitting motorcyclists were less likely to suffer from head, torso or fatal injuries than other motorcyclists. One key result from the study that was not mentioned in the DMV's Lane Filtering Study Report was the speed delta, which is the difference between the speed of the motorcyclist and surrounding traffic. As indicated by the lead researcher, Dr. Thomas Rice, a delta of 15 mph or less, up to a surrounding traffic speed of 50 mph, did not result in any associated changes to crash occurrence rates or injury types. The proposed legislation, which is more conservative than the practices outlined in the Berkeley study, has been crafted to ensure that the speed delta between

motorcyclists and other vehicles was supported by findings in this study to ensure motorcyclist safety in the Commonwealth was a driving force in this legislative effort.

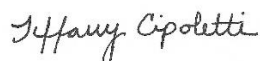
During the summer of 2021, the AMA along with other stakeholders participated in the Virginia DMV Lane Filtering study. The group was presented with key motorcycle crash statistics from the Traffic Records Electronic Data System (TREDS) managed by the DMV's Highway Safety Office. Dr. Kathleen Hancock of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University further analyzed these statistics for specific rear-end motorcycle impacts, which resulted in 12.5% of motorcyclist fatalities and 10.4% of injuries in 2020. Unfortunately, some stakeholders in the study group expressed opinions that legalization of lane filtering would only have limited benefits in the prevention of rear-end collisions in the Commonwealth. However, the AMA strongly believes that any efforts to reduce motorcyclist fatalities helps support the Virginia's "Toward Zero Deaths" vision. Lane filtering as a crash mitigation strategy is a robust approach to motorcycle safety.

The AMA believes motorcycles can absolutely be the primary mode of transportation for many Virginians and the rest of Virginia's road users would benefit from more people making the choice to ride a motorcycle for their primary mode of transportation. Compared to cars and SUVs, motorcycles have less impact on roadway degradation, are more efficient users of space — both on the road and when parked — and offer higher average fuel economy. Motorcycles help every other road user get where they are going more efficiently on less-degraded roads with more available parking at their destination. These benefits are only furthered by allowing the sensible practice of lane filtering in Virginia.

California (A.B. 51, 2016), Utah (H.B. 149, 2018) and Montana (S.B. 9, 2021) have each enacted lane filtering in their states. The AMA will continue to advocate for lane filtering in Virginia because it remains an important safety strategy for motorcyclists, while also reducing congestion for all road users.

Thank you for your time. I urge you and your colleagues to support House Bill 838.

Sincerely,



Tiffany Cipoletti  
Government Relations Manager, On-Highway  
American Motorcyclist Association