



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety

ODOT Transportation Safety Division, MS #3

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January 14, 2016

RE: GAC-MS Annual Report for 2015

Dear Governor Brown:

Your advisory committee on motorcycle safety would like to say, "Thank you for your continued support of motorcyclist safety programs!" The proclamation that you issued in May 2015 for Motorcyclist Awareness month continues to demonstrate to the riders of Oregon that their wellbeing is important and is a priority in transportation safety. Our 2015 report to you, describing the Committee's work conducted on your behalf, follows:

The Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety (GAC-MS) convened eight times in 2015. Much of the Committee's time was devoted to tracking and providing testimony on legislation. The Committee also reviewed motorcycle crash information and discussed potential countermeasures. The Committee maintained awareness of issues and trends that impacted the motorcycle riding community. We continued to conduct our meetings in an open, public format that included and encouraged participation by individual riders and rider groups in GAC-MS discussions. In addition we relied on a diverse group of liaisons from law enforcement, motorcycle safety training, the Oregon Military Department, the ODOT Transportation Safety Division and the Driver and Motor Vehicle Services Division.

Legislation

The Committee reviewed several pieces of motorcycle-related legislation. The Committee voted to oppose Senate Bill 533-A that permits proceeding through a stop light under certain conditions.

Senate Bill 878, which allows standing while astride a motorcycle or moped, was supported with both written and oral testimony.

The most controversial piece of legislation, Senate Bill 694, would have allowed motorcycles and mopeds to ride between lanes of traffic under certain conditions. A measure of just how divisive this issue has been is that the Committee voted 4-3 in March to support the measure with written and oral testimony. In the April meeting however, the Committee considered the amended legislation Senate Bill 694-1 and voted 4-3 to oppose, based on additional testimony provided by law enforcement.

Lane sharing/Lane splitting is a very emotionally charged issue and will, without doubt be introduced again in legislation. In 2016 the Committee's Chairman plans to appoint a subcommittee to gather data on the safety and law enforcement considerations of lane splitting, and lane splitting legislation.

TEAM OREGON Motorcycle Safety Training

In 2009 the Oregon State Legislature passed a law which phased-in mandatory motorcycle training over a five-year period. The law read in part: “As of January 1, 2015, all new riders, no matter their age, are required to take a state- approved motorcycle-training course as a condition of receiving a motorcycle endorsement.” The number of students enrolled in TEAM OREGON motorcycle training has ranged from a high of 11,966 in 2012, to a low of 10,715 in 2014. Enrollments in 2015 totaled 11,338.

In 2014 the Committee reviewed a new interactive, on-line alternative to the traditional classroom portion of the TEAM OREGON Beginning Rider Training and Intermediate Rider Training curricula. After field- testing confirmed that the new electronic version equaled or exceeded the traditional classroom course, the Committee voted in February 2015 to recommend that the Oregon Traffic Safety Committee approve the on-line program for Oregon’s mandatory Basic Rider Training. In March 2015 the Committee voted to recommend that the Oregon Traffic Safety Committee approve the TEAM OREGON integration plan for implementing the on-line classroom program. TEAM OREGON has now fully integrated the on-line classroom program.

Strategic Plan

At the beginning of 2015, the Committee’s strategic planning activities were placed on hold pending the results of a comprehensive motorcycle safety program assessment of the ODOT Transportation Safety Division (TSD) Motorcycle Safety Program. TSD requested that the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) conduct a motorcycle safety program technical assessment based on NHTSA Highway Safety Program Guideline Number 3, Motorcycle Safety. The assessment was conducted from July 13-17, 2015 by a nationally recognized team of experts in program management and motorcycle safety.

According to Highway Safety Program Guideline Number 3, Motorcycle Safety, a comprehensive motorcycle safety program is comprised of 11 program areas: program management; motorcycle personal protective equipment; motorcycle operator licensing; motorcycle rider education and training; motorcycle operation under the influence of alcohol or other drugs; legislation and regulations; law enforcement; highway engineering; motorcycle rider conspicuity and motorist awareness program; communication program; and program evaluation and data. The Technical Assessment Team addressed all of these subject areas in their report. The results of the NHTSA Assessment are expected to be released in early 2016.

Committee Membership

Mr. Chris Henry, Committee Member from the Mid-Valley, volunteered to serve on the development team for the new 5-year Transportation Safety Action Plan. In addition to representing motorcyclists on this team, Mr. Henry also draws from his formal transportation training and experience to contribute to the development of the new plan from multiple perspectives.

Mr. Ted Tracy declined re-appointment to Committee in order to pursue other volunteer opportunities and remains engaged in motorcycle safety issues.

Ms. Peggy Munsell’s appointment expired but she has agreed to continue to serve until her position is filled.

The Committee and the liaisons actively sought potential applicants from diverse riding groups and individuals. Four applicants were interviewed and we appreciate your selection of two highly qualified candidates.

At the October Committee meeting, the Chairman appointed a three-person recruitment/membership subcommittee to explore ways that new committee members can become quickly integrated into the Committee.. This work is designed to encourage immediate active participation from the new members. The results were distributed in late December and were discussed at the strategic planning meeting in January 2016.

Plans for 2016 and Beyond

The Committee conducted a meeting and strategic plan working session earlier this month. The new Strategic Plan that we are developing will be informed by the mandate in the Executive Order, the recommendations made in the new NHTSA Assessment, new scientific findings, current issues facing motorcycle riders, and the draft action items in the new ODOT Transportation Safety Action Plan.

In 2015, 57 motorcycle riders died in crashes in Oregon. This represents a nearly 24% increase over the 46 rider deaths in 2014. Speeding, impaired riding (alcohol/drugs), failure to negotiate curves, and collisions with other motorists were the primary factors related to the fatalities. The Committee will address these issues through action-oriented efforts in the new Strategic Plan.

Beginning in 2016 the Committee will further develop connections with the GAC-DUII and the Law Enforcement Advisory Committee (LEAC) to directly address some of the leading contributing factors in motorcycle crashes.

Based on our Recruitment/membership subcommittee's internal survey, we will expand the GAC-MS website to become a resource library for motorcycle safety issues. We intend this library to become a resource for the Committee, Legislators, motorcycle riders and safety advocates.

The Committee is partnering with TSD and TEAM OREGON to host the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators Symposium in Portland, Oregon in September 2016.

The Committee intends to increase its connections and partnerships with rider groups through direct contact and invitations to attend and present at Committee meetings. We also plan on attending regional motorcycling events as individuals and as an advisory body to share information as well as listen to the community to ensure that our deliberations are well informed.

The Oregon Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety is committed to saving lives through education, training, and by representing motorcyclists in the transportation safety system. Through partnerships, collaboration, listening and learning the Committee looks forward toward lowering rider injuries and fatalities, not just in Oregon, but nationally.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Reichenberg
Chairman
Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety

Cc:
Karmen Fore – Governor's Office– Transportation Policy Advisor
Troy Costales – Governor's Highway Safety Representative