

As a cyclist and motorist formerly living and commuting in Fargo, I write in strong support of HB 1252.

Cyclists and motorists are both responsible for the safe operation of their respective vehicles. This operation, as with the use of any vehicle or tool, is and must be a careful and conscious balance of risk. Most laws and regulations applying to operators of automobiles also apply to operators of bicycles when on a public right-of-way, but it is important to note that the risks presented to the traveling public may be quite different. The situations presented in HB 1252 are excellent examples of this.

The two scenarios addressed by HB 1252, stop signs and traffic signals, are common and often frustrating situations where motorists and cyclists often interact. The time and human energy to bring a bicycle to a stop and then proceed through an intersection is nontrivial compared to an automobile, and many users of the road are familiar with the slow and frustrating stop-start at intersections where motorists must wait for cyclists to come to a full stop, wait for a traffic signal if present, and then slowly proceed through the intersection. This frequently introduces unnecessary and dangerous risks that motorists may try to compensate for the perceived delay by failing to properly yield to cyclists or other motorists, attempting to veer around a cyclist unsafely, or proceeding too quickly or without due caution.

In both situations, the remedies proposed by HB 1252 provide clear alternatives that ensure safe and efficient use of public roads and streets, while ensuring that all vehicle operators are held responsible for their actions and the operation of their vehicles. In addition to reducing risk (as discussed above), the bill has the added benefit of making travel more expedient for all users of the road.

The bill has my strong support.