



peopleforbikes

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January 20, 2021

Dear Chairman Ruby and Members of the House Transportation Committee,

On behalf of PeopleForBikes, I am writing in support of HB 1290, relating to a vehicle overtaking and passing a bicycle on a roadway.

PeopleForBikes is the national advocacy group that works for better policies and infrastructure for bike riding. We strive to make bike riding **safer and more inclusive for everyone**, including our 10,000 individual supporters in North Dakota.

The traffic law potentially enacted with this bill is colloquially referred to as a "safe passing" law. This law would define a "safe distance" as three feet or greater and provide significant benefits to the public, including:

- A simple public message about how to safely pass a person on a bicycle.
- A means for enforcing unsafe behavior by drivers of motor vehicles.
- An effective, public policy response to the most common reason for the death of a person on a bicycle.
- A basis for education to drivers about sharing the road with people on bikes.

Forty-two states and the District of Columbia have safe passing laws that explicitly mention bicycles, and 33 states and the District of Columbia have safe passing laws that define a "safe distance" as at least three feet.

While there is no annually reported nationwide data on the types of crashes that cause the serious injury or death of bicyclists, a 2014 review of media reports found that 40% of deaths with reported crash types were rear-end crashes, likely resulting from unsafe passing. Data from the Insurance Institute for Highway Safety suggest that 45% of bicyclist deaths may be due to unsafe passing. Even where no crash occurs, unsafe passing contributes to bicyclist attitudes towards safety and motor vehicles. According to a 2012 survey by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, a motorist driving very close to a person on a bike was the most frequently reported action that made the person on a bike feel threatened, with 39% of people feeling threatened reporting that action as the cause for their fear for personal safety.

PeopleForBikes supports HB 1290 and urges a do pass recommendation on the bill. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

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