



# HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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*Testimony of Rep. Allison Hepler presenting*  
**LD 1230, An Act to Enhance Traffic Safety with Regard to the Operation of Bicycles on Public Ways**  
*Before the Joint Standing Committee on Transportation*

Good afternoon Senator Diamond, Representative Martin and members of the Transportation Committee. I am Rep. Allison Hepler representing the Towns of Arrowsic, Georgetown, Phippsburg, Woolwich, Dresden and part of Richmond. I'm pleased to present **LD 1230, An Act to Enhance Traffic Safety with Regard to the Operation of Bicycles on Public Ways**.

I am speaking today primarily on behalf of constituents who operate heavy equipment on the roadways, including dump trucks, bait trucks, semis, commercial plow trucks, and logging trucks that head down peninsulas to popular state parks, for instance. Like many Maine roads, these are curved, hilly and mostly lack rideable shoulders. At the same time, these roads travel alongside some of the most beautiful scenery in the state, whether it's tidal marshes, open bays, surf, or the wide river of the Kennebec. There's a good reason this area appears on many bicycle maps.

Along with the beauty of these working towns comes the risk of large trucks safely co-existing with bicycles. This is why I brought this bill forward. Current law states that bicyclists must ride as far to the right as possible but says nothing about riding single file or two abreast or more. This bill would only require single file riding – on the roadway – when being overtaken by a motor vehicle. If Maine were a “single file” state, there would be no riders riding 2 abreast.

I heard from the excavators and construction businesses I represent, and they tell me of their anxiety when they come across bicyclists riding two abreast when coming around a curve. These trucks do not stop or slow down quickly. If riders would ride single file, it would be easier for these drivers to safely pass them. How dangerous is this? The problem is that there is no data on near misses.

Bicyclists tell me that riding two abreast when there is a large number of riders makes for a shorter distance for motor vehicle drivers to pass them. I wonder if, in an organized ride such as that, bicyclists could break themselves into smaller groups so that single file riding would not create such a long line. Regardless, the vast majority of riders that residents see are much smaller groups of three or four.

I appreciate the social aspects of riding just as I appreciate the social aspects of walking or running two abreast. On a personal note, I am nearly a lifelong rider who commuted to work on a bicycle regularly for a number of years. I now live 65 miles from my workplace and have had to adapt my mode of transportation. I have also advocated for changes to Route 1 in “downtown Woolwich,” which resulted in adding bicycle lanes to that area several years ago.

Finally, let me say a word about road conditions. I assure you that I advocate for paved shoulders every time there is road repair work being done. One of the major roads that cuts through three of the towns in my district is a major thoroughfare for Bath Iron Works workers. The shoulders are not paved and in poor shape, even after it’s been repaved. Paved shoulders are not only critical to bicycle safety, they’re also safer for motorists.

Safety is at the heart of this bill. We all want to share the road. I’ve written about road safety in the past and am happy to work on further educational efforts toward that end. It may be that what seems clear for bicyclists is not always what motor vehicle drivers understand. This bill suggests a way to safely share the road.

Thanks for your time and I’m happy to answer questions.