

Subject: Testimony before the Transportation Committee in Opposition to LD 1230: Ostensibly, “An Act to enhance traffic safety with regard to the operation of Bicycles on Public Ways”.

From: Alvion Kimball, Orland Maine

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I am speaking as both a private citizen and an advocate for promoting tourism in the Pine Tree State. We already have a law requiring bicyclists to proceed in single file when being overtaken by a motor vehicle. LD 1230 only seeks to fine a bicyclist when that does not happen. It does not consider sightlines, hills, weather, road conditions, or traffic. 39 other States allow bicyclists to ride two abreast in their own lane, (imagine passing a tractor). Welcome to Maine, Vacation Land.

I Bicycle primarily on paved roads at the head of Penobscot Bay and in DownEast Acadia where there are hills, curves, no bicycle lanes, and too often, no shoulders on the road, conditions not unlike the rest of Maine. While gravity is my friend going downhill, I labor on the way up, frequently going only 4 mph; most other bicyclists pass me. They might be going 6-8 mph, (50% to 100% faster). At 4 mph I'm travelling at about 6 Ft/second, so it takes me 3 seconds to pedal 18 ft. A bicyclist passing me at 8 mph will need about 3 seconds to get safely by. In the meantime, a motor vehicle travelling 45 mph will have travelled 198', or 66 yards, 2/3 of a football field. In that short time, I've travelled just 6 yards uphill on a road with no shoulder not knowing what's coming on the other side, and another bicyclist who passed me in the same lane is now to be fined for riding two abreast. Did we hear or see the motor vehicle overtaking us, how long were we in view, did the operator blow a horn or turn on the headlights? How quickly is a bicyclist supposed to pass another one? No bicyclist can accelerate instantly to 45 mph. We do the best we can with what we have; let us all learn to share the road.

Speaking of sharing the road, the Bicycle Coalition of Maine has an important campaign going on entitled “Slow ME down” to reduce motor vehicle accidents and injury to vulnerable road users. Inherent in this campaign is sharing the road with all road users and eliminating distracted driving. More bicyclists, walkers, and joggers are using our roads regularly, sharing the road wisely is something we can all do better. Let us focus on educating all road users and making Maine a more welcoming place. LD 1230 does not improve safety and is not a step forward in sharing the road with residents or our guests.

Thank you for your service to the people of Maine.

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LD 1230 does not make the road safer for bicyclists or motor vehicles. It does not encourage driver or rider education, sharing the road, or making Maine a better place to live, visit, or ride a bicycle.