

April 8, 2021

Senator Bill Diamond, Representative Danny Martin and Members of Transportation Committee
Committee on Transportation
c/o Legislative Information Office
100 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333

Dear Chair Diamond, Chair Martin, and Members of the Transportation Committee:

On behalf of the PeopleForBikes Coalition we are writing to provide testimony in opposition to LD 1230, legislation that would impose a new requirement on bike riders mandating that they travel single file when being passed by a motor vehicle.

The PeopleForBikes Coalition is the national advocacy group and trade association that works for better policies and infrastructure for bike riding. Our coalition includes nearly 300 companies and brands that manufacture, distribute, or sell bicycles and related products, including electric bicycles.

The safety of bike riders is critical to our organization. If people do not feel that they can safely ride their bike on public rights of way, ridership will suffer. Safe and convenient bike riding is the cornerstone of realizing the health and environmental benefits that bike riding offers Americans and our communities. Laws relating to how bike riders and motor vehicles interact while passing are critical to safety on our streets, as these can be some of the most dangerous situations for bike riders.

We opposed LD 1230 because it will decrease the safety by encouraging drivers to make more dangerous passes when overtaking bike riders. Based on our review of similar laws in other jurisdictions, the approach of this bill is in the extreme minority of states that bar two abreast riding during passes, and it does not align with best practices. We believe there are several practical problems with the mandatory single file approach imposed by this bill:

- It will increase the amount of time that a motor vehicle spends passing cyclists. By requiring that bike riders reconfigure their alignment and stretching out their formation, it will be harder for the motor vehicle to find an opportunity to safely pass bike riders.
- It will encourage drivers to overtake riders in narrow spaces with limited room, particularly on two lane roads with one lane in each direction. We believe that drivers will be encouraged to pass single file lines of bicyclists on these narrow roads at inopportune moments, risking the safety of the bicyclists, driver, and oncoming traffic.
- The law deviates substantially from best practices by failing to address key issues like when a driver should change lanes and whether they can cross a solid line.

We oppose LD 1230 and encourage you to abandon this legislation as currently drafted. If any modification to Maine's safe passing laws is needed, it should be done in reference to best practices for these laws that have been widely adopted in other states.¹

Sincerely,



Alex Logemann
Policy Counsel

¹ The League of American Bicyclists has created a [model safe passing statute](#) that has been adopted by many states.

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People for Bikes

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