



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Transportation
Governor's Advisory Committee on
Motorcycle Safety
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RE: GAC-MS Annual Report for 2017

Dear Governor Brown:

On behalf of the Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety (GAC-MS), I thank you for your continual support of programs, educational materials, and other efforts to assist in the safety of Oregonians who travel by two and three wheels. The proclamation you issued on May 2017 for Motorcycle Safety Awareness Month continues to demonstrate to the riders of Oregon that their well-being is important and a priority in transportation safety both at the state and local levels. Our 2017 report to you, which follows below, summarizes the Committee's work conducted on your behalf.

The GAC-MS convened eight times in 2017. During this past year, the committee witnessed the departure of former past chair Van Moore (Salem) and immediate past chair Robert Reichenberg (Jefferson) who combined have provided decades of valuable service to the GAC-MS and the riders of Oregon. Joseph Elliott (Glenwood) also resigned to continue his motorcycle safety research interests. The committee welcomed C.J. Strauss (Portland) to the group and she has been a valuable addition. The GAC-MS interviewed several candidates to replace the departing members and forwarded the committee's recommendation to the Governor's office for approval in September. The normally eight-member committee is currently functioning with five members.

Legislation

The Committee worked closely with the Transportation Safety Division (TSD) Administrator Troy Costales to monitor legislative actions during the 2017 legislative session. He provided excellent summaries of the bill-making process, neutral assessments of the possible consequences of each bill, and provided requested data to the committee. His presentation on SB 385 – Motorcycle Lane Splitting and ODOT crash data was especially informative. Mr. Elliott gave the GAC's oral and written testimony in opposition to SB 385. The GAC has and continues to hear from the riding public on the topic of lane splitting; those who support this commuting technique having appeared before the GAC several times.

Motorcycle Safety and ODOT planning documents

The Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) presented its Highway Safety Plan (HSP) in March for the GAC's recommendation. The GAC reviewed the Motorcycle Safety section and gave a positive recommendation to the Oregon Transportation Safety Committee (OTSC) to adopt the HSP. GAC members Elliott, Henry, and Munsell had participated in the earlier TSD annual planning workshop at Silver Falls. They provided input that was incorporated into the HSP as well as performance measures for the ODOT

Transportation Safety Action Plan (TSAP). The TSAP has classified motorcyclists as an Emphasis Area, identifying us as Vulnerable Users of the roadway system.

The committee continues its work on the GAC-MS Strategic Plan. The committee is incorporating various recommendations from the 2016 National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) led Assessment Report of the Oregon Motorcycle Safety Program.

Outreach

Chair Russell (Bend), Vice Chair Henry (Eugene) and members Munsell and Deb Weber (Albany) participated with their peers on the GAC-DUII in a workshop with the Oregon Transportation Commission (OTC). The June discussion focused on the legalization of recreational marijuana and how that action could adversely affect riders. The discussion encompassed ways to deter motorcyclists from riding impaired as well as the potential consequences unimpaired riders face when other motorists are impaired.

Chair Russell, Vice Chair Henry, and members Munsell, Strauss, and Weber attended the TSD Safety Conference in Portland. Many of the discussions related to persistent factors in motorcycle fatalities and serious injuries such as inappropriate speeds, alcohol and/or drug use, and rider errors.

The GAC also provided comments and beta testing of ODOT's Safety Division redesigned website, both for general use and for queries specific to motorcycle safety.

Research

Given the persistence of the topic of lane splitting, both in public comments before the GAC and legislative bills introduced over multiple sessions, the GAC has formed a subcommittee on the topic. Vice Chair Henry leads the subcommittee, which includes members from the riding community and law enforcement. The group is currently preparing a literature review.

Goals for 2018

The committee will complete the Strategic Plan. The Plan will incorporate recommendations from the NHTSA Assessment, the GAC-MS input, continuing issues facing motorcycle riders, past TSD reports on motorcycle fatalities and serious injury aka Injury A crashes, and the TSAP.


The subcommittee on lane splitting will finish its work and issue a report, summarizing the committee's findings. The report will focus specifically on the motorcycle safety aspects of lane splitting as other aspects such as congestion and livability are outside the purview of the GAC-MS.

The GAC will invite members from ODOT Highway Design, District Maintenance as well as representatives from the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) and League of Oregon Cities (LOC) to discuss how these entities consider riders in their design, construction, and operations and maintenance practices. Historically, the GAC-MS has interacted almost exclusively with ODOT due to the high traffic volumes on the state highway system, yet riders also use city streets and county roads. The intent is for an informal discussion between the GAC-MS members and ODOT, AOC, and LOC representatives on potential hazards unique to motorcyclists (crack sealants, aka tar snakes; uneven pavement surfaces, aka edge traps; slippery surfaces such as road markings; and the need for advance signage for motorcyclists).

The GAC will continue its efforts to hold a meeting outside of Salem, although the attempt to hold a meeting coinciding with 2017's Rally in the Gorge in Hood River was unsuccessful due to lack of meeting room space, hotels, and travel restrictions on state agencies. The GAC intends to have a booth at the North American Motor Officers Association (NAMOA) training conference in Hillsboro in May as these events are open to the public.

The riding skills competition for police officers is well-attended and offers an excellent opportunity to interact with the riding community.

Respectfully submitted,



Peter Russell, Chair

Governor's Advisory Committee on Motorcycle Safety

Cc:

Karmen Fore, Governor's Office, Transportation Policy Advisor

Troy Costales, Governor's Highway Safety Representative