

RIDER RECOMMENDATIONS FOR “TEA-03”

Reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century

MRF TEA-03 INITIATIVE #2

Establish a “Motorcyclist Advisory Council” in the Immediate Office of the Administrator, Federal Highway Administration.

Executive Summary. Comprised of motorcyclists who are traffic design engineers, State transport officials and safety advocates, a “Motorcyclist Advisory Council” established in the immediate office of the Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), will advise the Administrator and coordinate with FHWA policy and design experts on the unique concerns of motorcyclists on a wide range of issues, including but not limited to crash barrier design, road maintenance practices and the implementation of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS).

Background. Lacing virtually every thoroughfare and roadway in the United States are crash barriers designed to control a crash by a car, prevent cross-over, slow momentum, minimize damage and lessen injury. Unfortunately, most crash barriers in America are dangerous to motorcyclists. Their very design, placement and construction -- exposed sharp-edged metal posts; the height, profile, design and composition of guard rails; proximity to the roadway; and, in some cases, the use of steel cable as the arresting medium -- could not be more damaging to a motorcyclist even if they had been designed with that grim purpose in mind.

Highway maintenance practices in the United States are also problematic. Examples: some asphalt patching results in the creation of “tar snakes” -- black ice to motorcyclists. Steel plates covering roadways under repair are also hazardous, particularly when wet, and some crews fail to erect signage to warn oncoming motorcyclists of the possible dangers ahead. Some crews fail to mix non-skid material with roadway paint, creating another slippery surface.

Sveriges Motorcyklister Centralorganisation (the Swedish Motorcyclist Association) (SMC) and the *Norsk Motorcykkel Union* (Norwegian Motorcycle Union) (NMU) have advanced motorcycle-friendly crash barrier technology that, they assert, meets the needs of larger motor vehicles as well. Our European ally, the Federation of European Motorcycle Associations (FEMA) is prepared to share their findings on the matter. On the maintenance front, some entities -- notably Victoria, Australia -- publish routine maintenance notes intended to alert road crews to rider-friendly maintenance practices. In the United States, several state transport departments (notably Pennsylvania’s DOT) pursue a program of eliminating barriers where they are not needed.

On the issue of the Intelligent Transportation System (ITS), motorcyclists have a host of safety and control concerns, from the appropriateness of mandating certain ITS technologies for motorcycles to the distraction of motorists (i.e., automobile drivers) by new technologies that may not “see” motorcycles.

Policy Interests. The principal policy interest of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation in advancing this initiative is to **assist the Administrator, FHWA, on matters where dialogue and coordination are the best route to deal effectively with highly technical issues.**

Establishment of a “Motorcyclist Advisory Council” that reports to the Administrator, FHWA, meets another policy objective of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, namely better integration of the motorcycle into national transport planning for the sake of safety for all road users and to advance the societal benefits of motorcycling (no road wear, less fuel consumption and the mitigation of traffic and parking congestion).

Comportment with TEA-21 Goals and Objectives. This initiative comports with the goals and spirit of TEA-21, specifically the enhancement of public participation and the creation of a national transport system that benefits all road users.

Legislation. To achieve the policy aims discussed, the Motorcycle Riders Foundation recommends the following legislation (proposed changes underscored):

Title 23, U.S. Code, **Chapter 1. Federal Highway Administration.** In the appropriation subsection, insert the following new subsection:

() **Motorcyclist Advisory Council.** The Administrator shall appoint a Motorcyclist Advisory Council to review, coordinate with FHWA planners and advise the Administrator on matters of concern to motorcyclists, including but not limited to barrier design, road maintenance practices, and architecture and implementation of Intelligent Transportation System (ITS) technologies. The council shall consist of members of the motorcycling community with professional expertise in national motorcycle safety advocacy, specifically one member recommended by the American Motorcyclist Association, one member recommended by the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, one representative of the National Association of State Motorcycle Safety Administrators, two members of State Motorcyclists’ Rights and Safety Organizations (SMROs) recommended by the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, as well as motorcyclists who are traffic system design engineers and State transportation department officials.