

2002-2003 Year of Great Loss - Year of Great Gains

Tom Wyld

MRF Vice President of Government Relations

September 2002

MRF works with the SMROs of Indiana, Minnesota, Michigan, California, Ohio and Pennsylvania in seeking a sponsor for a legislative remedy to new emissions standards for highway motorcycles proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency.

September 17: In cooperation with ABATE of Michigan, MRF provides oral testimony at the Ann Arbor public hearing on the proposed emissions standards for highway motorcycles conducted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The testimony highlights small business problems and poses unanswered safety questions.

September 19: MRF requests EPA extend its deadline for public comment to January 2004. The letter again highlights small business problems and poses unanswered safety questions.

September 20: MRF announces "The Motorcycling and Motorcycle Small Business Protection Act." The legislation seeks to set a reasonable emissions level, preempt and prevent the State of California from establishing a more stringent emissions standard for motorcycles and liberalizes the existing anti-tampering provision of the Clean Air Act by exempting highway motorcycles.

September 25: The Clerk of the House of Representatives announces "H.R. 5433, 'The Motorcycle & Motorcycling Small Business Protection Act,' a bill introduced by Mr. Barcia who is joined by Congressmen Shimkus and Kirk of Illinois..."

Throughout the month, MRF continues liaison with various Administration offices on the impact of restrictive emissions standards on rider freedom, rider safety and small business.

October 2002

MRF and SMROs conduct blanket appeal to Members of Congress to co-sponsor the Barcia

Bill. Co-sponsors include: U.S. Reps. Judy Biggert (R-Illinois), Dave Camp (R-Michigan), Melissa Hart (R-Pennsylvania), Mark Steven Kirk (R-Illinois), Ray LaHood (R-Illinois), Jerry Moran (R-Kansas), Ron Paul (R-Texas), David Phelps (D-Illinois), Mike Ross (D-Arkansas), John Shimkus (R-Illinois), and Jerry Weller (R-Illinois).

November 2002

As MRF and many Congressmen urge EPA to extend its deadline for public comment, MRF identifies likely research possibilities. Among the alternatives: commission an economist to conduct an economic impact analysis of the proposed rulemaking. MRF also reviews safety concerns with a professor of sports physiology at a major university to benchmark the costs and duration of a comprehensive, independent study to examine one aspect of the safety question: whether catalyzers in motorcycles increase or decrease the likelihood of heat-related injuries.

Pursuing the economic impact option, MRF calls for donations. In days, sufficient pledges from individuals and SMROs are in hand.

December 2002

MRF commissions Garrett A. Vaughn, Ph.D., to conduct the economic impact analysis. An economist who had done research for the Mercatus Center, a regulatory policy research center at George Mason University, Dr. Vaughn will complete his study and forward it to MRF on New Year's Day.

In company with ABATE of Wisconsin and a representative of an association of independent shops in Wisconsin, MRF meets with EPA, separately with several Members of Congress and meets also with Administration officials in the

White House Conference Center.

MRF meets with the staff of the Senate Environment & Public Works on the EPA issue, keeping ABATE of Oklahoma informed.

January 2003

MRF publishes the Vaughn Study. An excerpt: "EPA's proposed emission standards for on-highway motorcycles would cost... far higher than the per-ton costs of previously implemented mobile source pollution prevention programs... The EPA did not meet its obligations under the Small Business Regulatory Enforcement Fairness Act of 1996 (SBREFA)... [and] The EPA ignores the issue of rider safety..."

MRF files public comments to EPA. An excerpt: "The Motorcycle Riders Foundation finds that the EPA's proposed rule on highway motorcycles will endanger motorcyclists, sharply reduce motorcycling in America, imperil motorcycling small businesses, hike fuel consumption and traffic congestion and lead to more pollution, not less. A complete overhaul of this proposed rulemaking is in order."

January 19: Tom Wyld speaks to the Virginia Coalition of Motorcyclists.

January 24: MRF President Buck Kittredge and communications chief Teri Stobbs speak to ABATE of Illinois while Tom Wyld speaks to ABATE of Pennsylvania's annual gathering.

January 31: Tom Wyld speaks to ABATE of Ohio annual leadership seminar.

February 2003

With support from MRF and the American Motorcyclist Association, U.S. Senators Russ Feingold (D-Wisconsin) and Susan Collins introduce S. 423, "Health Care Parity for Legal Transportation and Recreational Activities Act."

ABATE of Michigan joins MRF in D.C. to visit the Michigan Congressional Delegation.

MRF reviews the new Motorcycle Safety Program (MSP) issued by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA). An excerpt: "True, the new NHTSA plan places more empha-

sis on rider training, acknowledges as unsatisfactory long waiting periods for rider training, takes a step closer to genuine motorist awareness and emphasizes that 'crash prevention...offers the greatest potential safety benefit for motorcyclists' ... but NHTSA is only leaning, rather than leaping, in the right direction toward motorcycle safety." MRF calls for NHTSA support for a resource injection for state rider education and motorist awareness efforts.

March 2003

March 2: Tom Wyld speaks at AMA's Introduction to Washington, D.C., attended by members of ABATE of Illinois, ABATE of Alaska, Massachusetts Motorcycle Association, ABATE of Wisconsin and other riders.

March 8: Tom Wyld speaks Freedom of Road Riders Missouri.

In company with ABATE of Virginia, MRF meets with U.S. Rep. Ed Shrock (R-Virginia) to appeal for a hearing on the proposed rulemaking for highway motorcycles from the perspective of rider freedom and small business protection.

At the request of ABATE of Utah, MRF writes to Governor Mike O. Leavitt to express "the grave concern of motorcyclists nationwide over an action being contemplated by the Utah Executive Appropriations Committee. Members of that committee seek to cut funds earmarked for Utah's Motorcycle Riders Education Program (MREP). We appeal to this committee to safeguard these funds... The Motorcycle Riders Foundation, ABATE of Utah and other SMROs are moving aggressively to advance motorcycle safety at the federal level through the reauthorization of the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (or TEA-21). We cannot achieve our safety goals, however, if states retreat from their commitment."

Bus Trip II makes motorcyclists' rights history again. Freedom of Road Riders (Missouri), ABATE of Arkansas, ABATE of Kansas, ABATE of Oklahoma and the Texas Motorcyclists' Rights Association II visit their Congressional delegations. ABATE of Minnesota, ABATE of Oregon, ABATE of Illinois, ABATE of Alaska and ABATE

of Wisconsin also visit their Congressional Delegations this month.

March 29: Tom Wyld speaks to Concerned Motorcycle Riders of Ohio (CMRO).

April 2003

ABATE of New York, ABATE of Ohio, ABATE of Wisconsin, ABATE of Iowa and ABATE of Colorado roll into the nation's capitol this month, bringing the number of Senators and Representatives we have met personally to well over 200 in just seven weeks time.

As the month begins, Congressmen Scott McInnis (R-Colorado) and Ted Strickland (D-Ohio) circulate a "dear colleague" letter urging Congress to adopt the same language as S. 423 to rescue our health care benefits. The two Congressmen express the hope to gain 20 signatures in a matter of days. With the strength of SMROs visiting Washington, the number exceeds 50 and, two weeks after the "dear colleague" letter is penned, H.R. 1749 is introduced with over 50 original co-sponsors.

April 20: A beloved father, grandfather and husband and the revered President of the Motorcycle Riders Foundation, Nathan "Buck" Kittredge dies as a result of injuries sustained in a motorcycle accident. Tom Wyld states, "We are all numb, grief-stricken and in utter disbelief at this unfathomable loss, and our hearts are one with Carolyn and the rest of the Kittredge family. We will carry on, as Buck would have us do, guided by this wonderful man's spirit and his unflagging devotion to his family, to his cause, and to each and every one of us."

April 25: Tom Wyld speaks to the many SMROs that make up Heartland STEAM, held this year in Minnesota.

May 2003

U.S. Reps. John Shimkus (R-Illinois) and Ted Strickland (D-Ohio) encourage other Congressmen to join them to question the EPA on the issues involving small business impact and safety.

May 13: The MRF Board of Directors unanimously elects Karen Bolin of Washington as MRF

President. Karen Bolin states: "We have a job to do. The MRF will indeed carry on with the level of excellence expected by every member, and in partnership with the voices of the roads we ride, the SMROs. The challenges we face on the national level are complex, but our goals are not. I, and the entire MRF Board of Directors, remain committed to the strength of the MRF's mission, and to the freedoms that Buck cherished."

June 2003

MRF Board Members Carol Simpson and Lynn Oldenburg attend the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) convention in Kentucky. Important gains are made in pressing the joint MRF-SMRO agenda for TEA-21 reauthorization. Among the highlights: discussions with Mary Peters, a motorcyclist with ties to riders in Arizona and the Administrator, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Part of the joint MRF-SMRO plan for TEA includes establishing a Motorcyclist Advisory Council in her office.

In a whirlwind visit, ABATE of California joins MRF in D.C. to visit the majority of the state's Congressional delegation. Several key Congressmen sign Shimkus-Strickland.

June 20: Congressmen Shimkus and Strickland dispatch their letter to the EPA, joined by 44 other Members of Congress.

H.R. 1749 health care co-sponsors edge over 80.

An MRF LEADERS' REPORT addresses broad-based funding challenges in the reauthorization of TEA-21.

MRF, AMA and SMROs criticize NHTSA bid to conduct "rider interviews" to "to determine rider characteristics and factors leading to motorcycle crashes." The agency claimed their interview scheme was backed by the National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety. Not so, said MRF: "In no way does the National Agenda for Motorcycle Safety support or serve as justification for the proposed interviews of riders." Further, MRF emphasized "our unshakable commitment to *preventing* the crash in the first place, and we continue to appeal to [NHTSA] for a meaningful partner-

ship and effective programs that lead to crash prevention... [particularly] support for a resource injection to help motorcycle safety [training]" – rider skill training and motorist awareness called for by the NAMS and part of the joint MRF-SMRO agenda for TEA-21 reauthorization.

tains or increases rider ed.); (d) motorcycle safety a NHTSA Section 402 grant priority; (e) tightening of the already existing provision barring NHTSA from lobbying the states using taxpayer dollars.

July 2003

H.R. 1749 health care co-sponsors reach 100.

Kathleen Hunt Wolf dies as the result of injuries sustained in an automobile accident in Italy. An expert on motorcycles and environmental policy, Kathleen was instrumental in helping shape the MRF stance on the EPA issue. Tom Wyld: "Kathleen was a true champion of motorcyclists' rights and safety, a dear personal friend of mine, and genuinely one of the leaders that comes to my mind when I use the expression Ride With The Leaders."

MRF moves to within two blocks of the Hart Senate Office Building, the biggest and best location yet for the street riders' voice in Washington.

July 24: NHTSA releases its 2002 fatality figures – the fifth straight year of escalating motorcyclist fatalities.

July 25: U.S. Reps. Steve LaTourette (R-Ohio) and Pete DeFazio (D-Oregon) launch a "dear colleague" letter to make motorcycle safety history. The direct result of MRF teamwork with and weeks of work by ABATE of Oregon and ABATE of Ohio, the LaTourette-DeFazio Safety Letter urges Congress to adopt the heart and soul of the joint MRF-SMRO TEA-21 reauthorization agenda. The effort was buoyed in May, 2002, when by Concerned Motorcycle Riders of Ohio visited and briefed Congressman LaTourette personally on the TEA-21 initiative. The letter encourages Congress to retain past TEA-21 protections (e.g., no federal blackmail) and encourages adoption of (a) crash prevention as the priority focus for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's motorcycle safety programs; (b) a Motorcyclist Advisory Council in the Federal Highway Administration; (c) motorcycle safety incentive grants to encourage as well as assist states in delivering rider skill training (\$100K for any state that main-