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MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS 02139

December 9, 1971

Senator William L. Saltonstall
State House
Boston, Massachusetts 02133

Dear Senator Saltonstall:

We are delighted that you are putting forward a bill to provide better regulation for bicycles. I appreciate being given the opportunity to comment on the present draft. These opinions are mine, not those of MIT. I shall ask some of my bicycling associates to send independent comments on this important matter.

The first three paragraphs of your new draft are excellent and I would not change them. Paragraphs 7, 13, 16, 18, 19, and 22 also seem desirable and enforceable. (There is a question in my mind about the practicability of getting five square inches of reflecting material on places such as a front fork, section 18 - maybe this is ambiguous.)

I believe that many of the other paragraphs are more in the nature of a code of behavior, and, as they are unenforceable, they should not be included. I should prefer to see a very powerful paragraph in which the bicyclist, or his parents or guardians if he is under 18, would be given full legal and financial responsibility for any accidents involving motor vehicles, bicyclists, or pedestrians to which the bicyclist's behavior is proven in law to have contributed. From what I can understand of the present situation, a bicyclist cannot be held responsible for almost any accident. Thus, they are untouchable.

I believe the idea of ticketing bicyclists for offenses would be useful, but the amount should be a maximum of \$10 and should be payable on the spot, if this is legal.

Your paragraph 8 requiring bicyclists to use bicycle paths where provided could bring opposition; a similar ordinance was fought for many years in Britain. The reason is best illustrated by, for instance, Memorial Drive and the Charles River bikeway. This may be an excellent facility for recreational Sunday-afternoon bicyclists, but for commuters it may be more dangerous than using the drive, in my opinion. This is because any bikeway in which the intersections are shared with motor vehicles, and in which the bicyclists therefore suddenly appear at these intersections, is bound to be more dangerous than if bicyclists pedal with the traffic.

1985 to 01 2000

Sgt John McCarthy
Charles Hyde-Wright
Jim Papadopoulos

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2. Jim Papadopoulos videoscams ykan u system d pledges administered

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Jim's Q2

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bicycles ms carry identyic Charles Hyde-Wright ydi k s pi object a c.

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With regard to your paragraph 12, bicycle trailers are, I believe, a much safer way of taking children than on auxiliary seats fastened to some part of the bicycle. I take my children on a trailer, and special bicycle trailers are made in Europe for this purpose.

I would be against your paragraph 15 or any suggestion that bicyclists use sidewalks with pedestrians for the same reason that I do not like bicycle paths unless they are entirely separate. Bicycles can cause great annoyance and danger to pedestrians. However, it is obviously the place for children under 10, but I do not know how you can legislate this.

We need better brakes, as hinted in your paragraph 20, but some exact performance specifications would be preferable (e.g., capable of stopping the bicycle and rider in 12 feet or less in wet or dry conditions from an initial speed of 15 MPH). The national manufacturers now work to some rather mild specifications, which I believe should be tightened up.

With regard to paragraph 23, I ride a bicycle with small wheels, neither of which exceeds 16" in diameter, but I would like to be included in the specifications. I realize that the aim of this paragraph is to exclude small children, and I am trying to think of an alternative way of stating this aim. If I come up with one, I will let you know.

Thank you again for your invaluable and welcome move on our behalf. Please give Ditt Talley my best wishes and assure him that I would like to help in any way I can.

Yours very sincerely,

David Wilson

David Gordon Wilson

DGW:cb

cc: Bruce Bailey
George Bailey
Norman Satterthwaite
Peter Griffith
Stephen Loutrel
Fred DeLong