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March 26, 1973

Dr. Ralph W. Galen
131 Mt. Auburn Street
Cambridge Ma 02138

Dear Ralph:

Please allow me to send this note in place of my attending your meeting March 28 to discuss Senator Saltonstall's bill S. 881 and others.

I would like to make as strong a case as possible for the need for greater regulation of bicycles.

At present, most bicyclists believe that traffic laws are for others, not themselves. We have all seen bicyclists crossing intersections against the lights; going the wrong way on one-way streets; riding against the traffic; using sidewalks and footpaths at high speed; and riding without lights or even reflectors on dark nights. Many of us have also seen bicyclists knock over elderly pedestrians on cross walks; swerve in front of moving vehicles causing sometimes violent avoiding manouevres; and cause unnecessary delay to a line of waiting vehicles by going to the front and blocking a right-turning stream at a light-controlled intersection.

Sometimes these tactics bring advantages to the individual bicyclists. They bring little but harm to society as a whole and to other bicyclists in particular. There is general antipathy towards bicyclists on the part of motorists and pedestrians alike. While many accidents have resulted from such selfish behavior, there will sooner or later be an accident which for some reason brings the public spotlight to bear, and there is then likely to be a clamor to clamp down very severely on our freedom.

In all the countries I have ridden in in three continents bicyclists have cheerfully accepted rigorous regulation, and have in turn been accorded not only rights but a courtesy totally lacking in this country. I believe that we are at least partly to blame. Let us for our own well being not only accept regulation but let it be known to all road users that we welcome it and look for enforcement.

Have a good meeting and very best wishes

copies: Sen. William Saltonstall; Rep. Ralph E. Sirianni Jr.