

**MICHIGAN TRAILS & GREENWAYS ALLIANCE**

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LEAGUE OF MICHIGAN BICYCLISTS

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Complete Michigan Streets

Make Michigan roads safe for all users

- **House Bill [6151](#)** (Switalski)
- **House Bill [6152](#)** (Byrnes)

Action

Michigan bicyclists support Complete Streets legislation that would:

- **Design and build State roadways to accommodate all public right-of-way users safely, including bicyclists, pedestrians, people with mobility aids, motorists, and transit users of all ages and abilities.**
- **Require all MDOT employees involved in planning, design, construction, maintenance and operation of the State transportation system to consider fully the needs of non-motorized travelers.**
- **Require other recipients of Act 51 funding, including local road agencies and municipalities, to adopt Complete Streets policies.**

Issue

The public right-of-way should be designed and built for safe travel by everyone. Complete Streets laws and policies require that the safety, interests and convenience of all users, including motorists, pedestrians, transit users, bicyclists and those who travel with mobility aids be considered in the design and construction of transportation projects.

Fifty percent of metro-area trips are three miles or less, and 28 percent are less than one mile, yet 65 percent of these short trips are by car. Incomplete streets are barriers to safely walking, bicycling, or using public transit.

On March 11, 2010 USDOT Secretary Ray LaHood signed a policy statement on Bicycle and Pedestrian Accommodations Regulations and Recommendations that states, *“Transportation agencies and local communities should go beyond minimum design standards and requirements to create safe, attractive, sustainable, accessible, and convenient bicycling and walking networks.”* LaHood’s statement goes on to spell out specific Complete Streets elements that should be incorporated into all future road projects across America.

Facts

- Sen. Harkin (D-IA) and Rep. Matsui (D-CA) introduced the Complete Streets Act of 2009 in the U.S. Senate and House to ensure that federal transportation investments provide safe travel for Americans whether they are driving, bicycling, walking, or taking public transit.
- Complete Streets policies have been adopted in more than 130 jurisdictions across the United States, including the cities of Lansing, Jackson, Flint and Genesee County.
- More than 65 Michigan businesses and organizations have signed on as partners in the Michigan Complete Streets Coalition.
- Increased commitment to and investments in bicycle facilities and walking networks can help meet goals for a healthier and more active population; cleaner air; less congested roadways; improved economic development; and more livable, safe, cost-efficient communities.
- One-third of Americans do not drive - many of them elderly, poor, or young. Without walking, biking, or transit, they have limited or no mobility options. (National Complete Streets Coalition)

For More Information

To learn more please visit www.MichiganCompleteStreets.org.

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Vulnerable User Legislation

Give Michigan Road Cyclists a Brake

- **Senate Bills [529](#) and [530](#)** (GEORGE)
- **House Bills [4958](#)** (KNOLLENBERG) and **[4959](#)** (LELAND)

Action

Michigan bicyclists ask the Governor and Michigan Legislature to:

- **Enact the same penalties for any traffic violator who commits a moving violation that injures or kills a bicyclist as for injuring or killing a farm-vehicle operator, i.e.:**
 - **Imprisonment for not more than one year or a fine of not more than \$1,000.00, or both, for injuring a bicyclist (a misdemeanor).**
 - **Imprisonment for not more than 15 years or a fine of not more than \$7,500.00, or both, for killing a bicyclist (a felony).**

Issue

Rising energy prices and concerns about health, fitness and the environment have increased bicyclists on the roads. Motor vehicles and bicycles must share the road. Motorists' increasingly aggressive driving will only increase bicyclist injuries and deaths.

More bicyclists are reporting "road rage" by motorists. The same penalties should apply to drivers who injure or kill bicyclists as to drivers who injure or kill drivers of similarly slow-moving farm vehicles (who are much less vulnerable than bicyclists).

Convicted drivers can serve as little as days or months for seriously injuring or killing a bicyclist. Judges and prosecutors have few tools for controlling aggressive or reckless drivers. Specific penalties for injuring or killing a bicyclist will deter drivers from endangering bicyclists.

Facts

- 2,084 Michigan bicyclists were involved in motor vehicle crashes, 1,638 were injured and 25 were killed in 2008 alone - eight more than reported in 2007. (Office of Highway Safety Planning)
- Bicyclists have the same rights and responsibilities as drivers but, because they (like farm vehicles) are usually slower than other vehicles, impatient drivers endanger bicyclists lawfully using the roads. This legislation highlights the need for motorists to share the road safely with bicyclists and deters unsafe driving near bicycles.
- The penalties in this legislation give prosecutors and judges additional flexibility in charging and punishing offenders. They are consistent with those established by Public Act No. 103, Public Acts of 2001, for drivers who injure or kill a farm-vehicle operator.

For More Information

To learn more contact LMB Associate Director John Lindenmayer directly at 1-888-642-4537 or jlindenmayer@LMB.org

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Bicycle Safety in Drivers Ed

Give Michigan Road Cyclists a Brake

- **Senate Bills [531](#)** (GEORGE)
- **House Bill [4960](#)** (LELAND)

Action

Michigan bicyclists ask the Governor and Michigan Legislature to:

- **Require Michigan drivers education to include classroom instruction on the laws pertaining to bicycles and emphasize awareness of the operation of bicycles on the streets, roads, and highways of this state.**

Issue

Drivers and bicyclists are safest when they share the road and follow the same traffic rules. Both have the same rights to be on the road and the same obligations. Drivers and bicyclists should observe speed limits, stop at traffic lights and stop signs, signal when changing lanes, yield the right-of-way where mandated, and maintain safe distances from all vehicles, including bicycles.

However, Michigan's drivers education program does not require new drivers to be educated about bicyclist's rights and responsibilities on the roadways. This leads many incompletely educated motorists to insist incorrectly - and too often violently - that bicyclists belong on sidewalks. Angry motorists regularly threaten cyclists both verbally and physically. Hundreds of Michigan bicyclists are injured or killed each year in automobile/bicycle collisions. Failing to include a bicycle-safety curriculum in the state drivers education program endangers the lives of all roadway users.

Objectives

- To encourage drivers to share the road with bicyclists.
- To reduce car/bicyclist fatalities and injuries through bicycle-awareness training for new drivers.
- To improve new drivers' understanding of safe bicycling and bicyclists' legal right to use Michigan roads.

Facts

- Every year, crashes with motor vehicles kill hundreds of bicyclists on America's roadways and injure thousands more.
- 2,084 Michigan bicyclists were involved in motor vehicle crashes, 1,638 were injured and 25 were killed in 2008 alone - eight more than reported in 2007. (Office of Highway Safety Planning)
- Drivers education and training can significantly reduce common, dangerous driver errors.
- Michigan has over seven million licensed drivers.
- Michigan requires no drivers education for drivers 18 or older.
- Driving tests are not administered by the Department of State, but by private third-parties.
- Michigan's Graduated Driver Licensing program does require drivers under age 18 to complete 24 hours of in-class instruction, six hours of behind-the-wheel instruction, and four hours of observation. This provides ample time for instruction in bicycle safety and sharing Michigan's roadways safely with bicyclists.

For More Information

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Distracted Driving

Action

Michigan bicyclists sincerely thank the Governor and Michigan Legislature for adopting a texting while driving ban as a primary offence.

This ban will better protect motorists, bicyclists and pedestrians and will save countless lives, however **we seek even stronger distracted driving legislation that will ban:**

- **cell phones (including hands-free)**
- **all other portable electronic devices.**

Issue

We endorse the efforts of the National Safety Council and U.S. Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood to ban the use of cell phones while driving, especially among novice drivers.

Bicyclists and other vulnerable roadway users - such as pedestrians, children, the elderly and those who use mobility devices - deserve protection from inattentive drivers. No one should be injured or killed because of avoidable distractions.

Driving requires full concentration on the road. Drivers who use cell phones are much more likely to be in an accident. When bicyclists are involved, the results tend to be fatal.

Facts

- Driving while using a cell phone reduces the amount of brain activity associated with driving by 37 percent. (Carnegie Mellon)
- Nearly 6,000 people died in 2008 in crashes involving a distracted driver, and more than half a million were injured. (NHTSA)
- Younger, inexperienced drivers under 20 years old have the highest proportion of distraction-related fatal crashes. (www.distraction.gov)
- Drivers who use hand-held devices are four times as likely to get into crashes that result in serious injury. (Insurance Institute for Highway Safety)
- Using a cell phone use while driving, whether it is hand-held or hands-free, delays a driver's reactions as much as having a blood alcohol concentration at the legal limit of .08 percent. (University of Utah)
- Eighty percent of crashes are related to driver inattention. Although some other activities may be more dangerous, drivers use cell phones more often and longer, making cell phones the #1 source of driver inattention. (Virginia Tech 100-car study for the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.)

For More Information

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County Bicycle Trails Fund Act

- **House Bill [5568](#)** (Miller)

Summary

This bill would authorize county board of commissioners to establish a county bicycle trails fund that will be used exclusively for the establishment or maintenance of bicycle trails in the county. If such a fund is established, the commission would also need to establish a county bicycle sticker to provide revenue for the fund. The price of the sticker could not exceed \$50, and the use of the trails could not be restricted to those who have purchased stickers.

Action

Michigan trail advocates ask the Michigan Legislature to:

- Oppose the establishment of county bicycle trails funds in order that the source of funding for trails on the local government side not be limited to that which derives from a \$50 bicycle sticker.

Issue

The acquisition and development of multi-use trails usually requires an amalgamation of funding sources at the local, state and federal level. Most public grants require at least a 25% match from local government. At times, local funding is supplemented by private foundations in order to come up with the required total to make the match, but not all geographic regions of the state have a private funding source nearby (and one that awards grants for trail projects) where they can apply for funding. While this legislation at face value would add an exclusive funding source for local match dollars, it could potentially have the opposite effect, that of stifling county progress on trails. A lack of contributors to the fund might be seen as a reason to deny funding for trails, even though they are well used -- especially if the use is by non-cyclists or for transportation purposes by non-cyclists such as students, walkers and others. Trail projects should be funded on the basis that the electorate determines they are for the public good, not based on whether there is enough money from bicycle sticker revenue.

Facts

- Multi-use trails are used by more than just bicyclists. Hikers, rollerbladers, moms with strollers, the disabled community, and sometimes, equestrians, are part of the mix of trail users.

For More Information

To learn more, contact Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, MTGA, at 517-485-6022 or nancy@michigantrails.org.

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Expansion of ATV Use on Public Lands

- **House Bill [4411](#)** (Sheltrown)

Summary

The bill would amend the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act to allow two categories of people to operate ATV's in places that are otherwise off limits to ATV's. Lands off-limits include state game areas, state parks, and state recreation areas where ATV's are currently prohibited (except on such areas designated for their use), other state-owned lands under the management of the Department of Natural Resources and the Environment, forest nurseries and planting areas, public lands posted or reasonably identified as areas of forest reproduction, dedicated natural areas of the DNRE, and other areas where it has been determined that ATV operation could create an erosive condition or destroy trees or growing crops..

Action

Michigan trail advocates ask the Michigan Legislature to:

- **Oppose the proposed lifting of restrictions for use of ATVs on public lands, including all state trails, by those 60 years of age or older and by those with disabilities**

Issue

It would be the responsibility of the Department of Natural Resources and Environment to monitor the usage of ATV's on restricted lands, to ensure ATV users fit either of the above two categories.

The use of ATV's on trails poses a serious safety threat for walkers, in-line skaters, joggers and cyclists. The disabled are currently able to use Amigo's and other such devices on any trails – because of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Allowing ATVs, which can reach significant speeds, would be very unsafe.

Facts

- Michigan's ORV/ATV trail/route system covers 3,200 miles with 73% in state forests, of which 30% is cycle trail, 50% is ATV trail and 20% is route. In the Lower Peninsula, the system is the only legal place to ride Non Secretary-of-State licensed ORV's on public lands. In the Upper Peninsula, it is legal for ORV's to operate on state forest roads as well as the designated trail system.
- Michigan's multi-use trail system currently allows ATV use on 13 trails in the Upper Peninsula. ATV's are currently not allowed on any multi-use trails in the Lower Peninsula. There are, however, plenty of ATV-designated trails throughout the state.

For More Information

To learn more contact Nancy Krupiarz, Executive Director, MTGA at 517-485-6022 or nancy@michigantrails.org.

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Recreation Passport Law

Public Acts 32 – 35 of 2010 create a state recreation passport which will pay for the management of state parks, recreation areas, and forest recreation programs as well as support local units of government on their outdoor recreation projects. It replaces the traditional state park and boating motor vehicle permit system currently in place at state parks, recreation areas, and boat launches.

Action

Michigan trail advocates sincerely thank the Governor and Michigan Legislature for adopting the state recreation passport as a convenient way to pay for the maintenance of state parks and forest recreation areas, including state-owned multi-use trails.

Frequently Asked Questions about the Recreation Passport (from the Michigan Department of Natural Resources and Environment)

Q. Why was this enacted; what's wrong with the current system?

A. The DNRE, Recreation Division lost all taxpayer support for its programs in 2004. Since then, park operations have been funded primarily from user fees. Currently, we are able to address less than 1% of the critical infrastructure repair needs annually (\$38 million needed), and are about \$4.8 million short of adequately funding day-to-day park operations. Without an alternative funding structure in place, drastic cuts to park programs and services were inevitable.

Q. I don't use state parks, so why should I buy the Recreation Passport?

A. Parks, forests and trails offer benefits for all. Your support will protect our unique lands and waters for future generations. The state park program benefits local economies by generating more than \$650 million in local tourism spending. Supporting this program through the purchase of the Recreation Passport will help to ensure a vibrant tourism industry, a healthy local economy, and leave a legacy for generations to come.

Q. Why should I give the state more money? I already pay too much in taxes.

A. Participation in the Recreation Passport program is optional, not mandatory, and taxpayer support of the state parks ended in 2004. Over the past four years, the state park budget has been reduced by \$2.8 million each year. Permanent park staffing has diminished nearly 15% since 2000. Michigan is recognized nationally as operating one of the most efficient state park systems in the country.

Q. I heard the DNRE's Park Endowment Fund just received a large sum of money from the oil and gas lease auction of state-owned land parcels. If that's true, why do we still need the Recreation Passport?

A. The dollars going into this fund are certainly a windfall and great news for Michigan, but the final amount has yet to be determined. Even if this endowment fund were to receive the maximum amount allowable, that funding would cover just 10 percent of the cost of a years-long backlog of needed infrastructure repairs at our state parks and recreation areas.

The real difference is this: the Park Endowment fund offers much-needed support for Michigan state parks and recreation areas, but does so for a narrowly defined list of fixes and in amounts that vary widely year to year. The funding is really a drop in the budget that's overflowing with needs that must be met in a more sustainable and predictable way.

For other questions on the Recreation Passport, please go to the MDNRE website:

www.michigan.gov/dnre or the MTGA website at www.michigantrails.org.

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