



**DATE:** April 1, 2005  
**BILL NUMBER:** Senate Bill 551  
**BILL TITLE:** Vehicle Laws – Bicycles and Motor Scooters – Exceptions to Requirements to Stay Right  
**POSITION:** **Support**

*International Police Mountain Bike Association* - fully supports the passage of Senate Bill 551, establishing exceptions to the requirements of staying right while operating bicycles and motor scooters on the roadways of Maryland.

Currently our organization of over 3,000 members follows the guidelines set before you for change. For over 14 years, the International Police Mountain Bike Association has taught standardized curricula based on principals, which mimic and support this Bill. As of to date 40 other states use the same or similar wording to set the basis for how and where operators of bicycles and motor scooters should and will operate their vehicles. This philosophy is why we support this Bill.

When a bicyclist or motor scooter operator operates their mode of transportation, they fare best when they act and are treated as drivers of vehicles.

Senate Bill 551 has done this in one form or another, but tends to leave numerous gray areas for interpretation. Hence the request for change.

The basic principals of vehicular cycling centers around four (4) basic principals:

- Obey the rules of the road,
- Be Predictable,
- Be Visible, and
- Communicate.

The core value of these principals is to be predictable. By requiring cyclists and motor scooter operators to function as a motor vehicle would be required, it will reduce the potential of fatal crashes between motorists.

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In teaching the public concerning the basic principals of safe operating vehicle procedures, our curriculum centers on the “ONE-THIRD” of the lane rule. By approaching a controlled intersection or while traveling on the roadway, a cyclist should position himself or herself in the appropriate one-third of the right most lanes that goes to their intended destination. This may require the operator to be in a center portion of a lane or the far right hand side. Motor vehicles traveling at a much higher rate than that of the cyclist should be able to expect the cyclist to remain in the right one-third of the lane, even though they may be going straight. By simplifying the wording of this bill, it will set the basis for safety for both motorist and cyclist in the state.

Incorporating the changes of this bill will enhance the already firm basis operators of bicycles, motor scooters and motor vehicles enjoy. A bicyclist is three (3) to four (4) times more likely to be injured in traffic than a motorist is. 15% of all bike crashes result in death or serious injury when combined with impacting a motor vehicle. It is believed only one out of ten bicycle crashes involving a bicycle and a motor vehicle are reported. Changing this bill possibly could prevent one more collision, and lessen the impact on the public, the community and someone’s family.

Knowing how to survive in traffic depends on understanding how traffic flows and being able to move safely and legally within it. Survival of all modes of transportation depends on each person’s ability to comprehend the laws and be able to apply them to their every day use of the roadways of this state.

It is for these reasons that the International Police Mountain Bike Association requests a favorable report on Senate Bill 551. For more information please contact Chris Davala, IPMBA Instructor and Executive Board Member, 443-235-4360.

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