

Maryland Department of Transportation



Office of the Secretary
7201 Corporate Center Drive
Hanover MD 21076

Committee: JPR **Date:** 3/09/05 **Bill#:** SB 551
Position: Support w/
Amendment **Title:** Vehicle Laws-Bicycles and Motor
Scooters-Exceptions to Requirement to
Stay Right

Explanation: SB 551 would provide that bicycles and motor scooters can ride anywhere in a traffic lane if they are traveling at the "normal" speed of traffic. It also would add several other circumstances (the avoidance of pedestrians or road hazards, approaching locations where right turns are authorized, and operating in a lane that is too narrow to travel side by side with other traffic) under which these vehicles need not be ridden to the far right of the roadway, even when traveling slower than the normal speed of traffic.

Comment: SB 551 brings Maryland law in line with similar language adopted by other states and the Uniform Vehicle Code. The Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) supports SB 551 with the following amendments. (MDOT amendments indicated by strikethrough and underlined text).

Section 21-1205. Riding on roadways or on highway.

(a) *Riding to right side of roadway.* — Each person operating a bicycle or a motor scooter AT A SPEED LESS THAN THE NORMAL SPEED OF TRAFFIC AT THE TIME AND PLACE AND UNDER THE CONDITIONS THEN EXISTING on a roadway shall ride as near to the right side of the roadway as practicable and safe, except when [making]:

- (1) MAKING or attempting to make a left turn [, when operating];
- (2) OPERATING on a one-way street [, or when passing];
- (3) PASSING a stopped or slower moving vehicle;
- (4) AVOIDING PEDESTRIANS OR ROAD HAZARDS;

over

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- ~~(5) — APPROACHING A LOCATION WHERE A RIGHT TURN IS AUTHORIZED~~
- (5) THE RIGHT LANE IS A RIGHT TURN ONLY LANE;
- (6) OPERATING IN A LANE THAT IS TOO NARROW FOR A BICYCLE OR MOTOR SCOOTER AND ~~A~~ ANOTHER VEHICLE TO TRAVEL SAFELY SIDE BY SIDE WITHIN THE LANE.

The MDOT amendment ensures that bicyclists or motor scooter operators using this exception are not impeding overall traffic flow. The amendment also distinguishes right lanes in which traffic is allowed to either turn right or proceed straight from right lanes where the only permitted movement is to turn right and applies the exception only to right turn only lanes.

For these reasons, the Department respectfully requests a favorable report with amendments on SB 551.