

Arizona legalizes lane filtering Utah extends its law for an additional five years

A bill legalizing lane filtering has recently cruised through the Arizona Senate and House with strong bipartisan support and has been signed into law by Gov. Doug Ducey, putting the state in the company of Utah and Montana.

The passage of Senate Bill 1273, sponsored by Sen. Tyler Pace (R-Mesa District 23) and championed by ABATE of Arizona, allows riders to cruise slowly between lanes at speeds no faster than 15 mph if the other vehicles are stopped. Modeled off Utah's legislation, the practice can only be done on roads posted at 45 mph or less. It does not allow riders to pass on the shoulder or on the median.

"This law has been four years in the making, but we had a really great sponsor for the bill this year with Senator Pace," said Michael Infanzon, legislative director for ABATE of Arizona. "He is an active motorcycle rider, and it was key to have someone who understood the danger of being

rear-ended. This is all about safety and nothing more than part of the plan to reduce motorcycle fatalities in Arizona."

With the law set to be in effect 90 days after adjournment, likely to be mid-September, ABATE of Arizona and the Arizona Motorcycle Safety & Awareness Foundation (AMSAF) will be working with the Governor's Office of Highway Safety and the Department of Public Safety to educate riders and the public on the new legislation, including via PSAs and TV spots.

According to the Arizona Department of Transportation's (ADOT) most recent data, 30 percent of all motorcycle crashes in 2020, including 11 out of 106 fatal motorcycle collisions, were the result of rear-end collisions.

"ABATE of Arizona put up a strong showing to successfully get this law signed," said the American Motorcyclist Association's (AMA) Western

States Representative Nicholas Haris. "It is a welcome sight to see more states adopting common-sense safety laws that protect motorcyclists when they are most vulnerable to a collision. The AMA is committed to working with riders nationwide on efforts to pass similar legislation and educating the public about its benefits."

Meanwhile, Utah has extended the authorization for motorcyclists to lane filter for an additional five years to allow state officials to review the practice and gather data on its safety benefits.

The AMA endorses California-style lane splitting, given its long-term success and a University of California-Berkeley research study showing that the practice enhances motorcycle safety. The AMA will assist groups and individuals working to bring legal lane splitting and/or filtering to other states; they are currently actively engaged in supporting a lane filtering bill in Oklahoma.

For information on ABATE, visit abateofaz.org.

For information on AMSAF, visit amsaf.org.

For AMA's full position statement on lane splitting, visit americanmotorcyclist.com. ■

AMA photo: Kevin Wing

