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VA Bicycling Federation

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New Law Should Decrease Fatalities and Injuries on Virginia Roads

RICHMOND – Virginia's roads should be safer for bicyclists across Virginia beginning July 1. That's when a new law requiring motorists to pass bicyclists by three feet goes into effect.

"As we see more people choose to ride bikes or walk rather than drive their cars, this extra foot of clearance makes streets much safer for cyclists" according to Champe Burnley, President of the Virginia Bicycling Federation (VBF) who supported the legislation. "We hope that drivers will use extra care when they pass a rider and avoid potential crashes."

Virginia law currently requires a motorist to pass a bicyclist by two feet. The Commonwealth is the twenty-first state to pass a three foot law. Pennsylvania requires four feet.

According to statistics from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Highway Safety Office, in 2013, eight people died and more than 600 people were injured in crashes involving bicycles on Virginia roadways.

The legislation was sponsored by Senator Bryce Reeves, R- Spotsylvania. "Our ability to be able to work across the aisle and build relationships in a bipartisan manner allowed us to successfully get this commonsense legislation approved. Those that are active in the bicycling community—as well as my Republican and Democrat friends in both the House of Delegates and the Senate—were all part of making this legislation possible. I will continue to work very hard on areas where we can find common ground and consensus for the people of Virginia."

The VBF is working with other organizations like DriveSmart Virginia and state agencies such as DMV, VDOT and the Virginia State Police to educate drivers about the new law.

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