

TAX BREAKS FOR MICHIGAN MOTORCYCLISTS

According to the US Federal Highway Administration, in 2000 the 75 largest metropolitan areas "experienced 3.6 billion vehicle-hours of delay, resulting in 21.6 billion liters (5.7 billion gallons) in wasted fuel and \$67.5 billion in lost productivity."

If local, state and federal government agencies included motorcycles in transportation planning, a clear message would be sent to the American public: Motorcycles are a solution to a problem, not a nuisance to be tolerated.

Motorcycles have a light impact on infrastructure, require a small space to park and can "filter" through traffic so that their impact on traffic volume is usually less than minimal. As motorcyclists these things are obvious to us, but to policy decision-makers and advisors they must be pointed out. Such integration should include tax breaks to motorcyclists, like Zero Emissions vehicles get in California.

Hybrid cars have gotten hefty tax credits when you buy one new. Why? They get that credit for being fuel efficient. So why not bikes?

My Electraglide gets 38 - 45 mpg. So how about a tax credit for my motorcycle? Is this not a good way to promote conservation?

Some obvious benefits to motorcycle traffic:

Conservation - more fuel efficient than [autos and equal or better than hybrids in many cases.](#)

[Space - Bikes simply take up less space on the road and in the parking lots.](#)

Motorcycles are not considered a legitimate means of transportation in Michigan, but toys for hobbies. For those of us who utilize a motorcycle at every opportunity this concept could not be further from the truth. We choose to ride motorcycles for a multitude of reasons, including as a means of economical travel. We spend a majority of our leisure and recreational time riding motorcycles, taking trips and traveling the country by motorcycle.

More and more we ride to work. We ride to the movies. We ride to visit family and friends. In a nation which is emphasizing a movement to change, and more conservative fuel economy, motorcycles seem to have been the tree not seen for the forest.

Sadly, despite the glaring obviousness of the efficiency of motorcycles as transportation, we find ourselves as motorcyclists being taken advantage of because of or choice of transportation, being required to pay the same or more for the same considerations as gas guzzling automobiles and even SUV's. Even state laws of the road supposedly designed for our protection and safety are lopsidedly favorable to automobile drivers and tend to put the brunt of responsibility on motorcyclists shoulders. Michigan motorcyclists are further disadvantaged by the automobile insurance industry, which takes our money proportionally to automobile drivers, but deprives us of equal benefit of MCCA funds and other benefits. This despite the fact that motorcyclists have the same rights to the roads as any other users.

It is past time to consult with our Michigan legislators and let them know that we will not silently continue to be taken advantage of just because we ride motorcycles. We contribute as taxpayers and workers in this state as much as anyone, and more so when it comes to the environment, fuel efficiency, and traffic congestion related lost productivity. It is time to demand that we be recognized, promoted, and rewarded for being the leaders of an agenda that our Governor and our President proclaim to be the preeminent ambition all Americans should be striving toward.

We should be seeking;

Tax breaks.

Motorcycle travel specific engineering on our roadways.

Toll breaks on bridges and roads.

Comprehensive legislation that directs the responsibility equally upon automobile drivers and motorcyclists to create safer driving/riding environments on our roads.

Equal protection under the law.

Promotion of motorcycle use, and funding to further it as a real, live, working alternative to low efficiency travel.

Insurance Reform that equalizes the costs and benefits for motorcyclists.

Rusty "Thorsblood" Bongard