

The MRF wishes to apologize for the earlier release today. It was the result of a technical glitch. It has been corrected and we hope to avoid such occurrences in the future. Washington Update

Youth Motorcycle Ban and NHTSA Administrator Strickland

Thursday in Washington, the United States House Energy and Commerce Committee Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade and Consumer Protection held a hearing on the Consumer Product Safety Enhancement Act. This bill, which has yet to receive a number, aims to tighten up some of the problems with the initial consumer product safety act (CPSIA) such as the all-out ban of youth motorcycles and ATVs.

In the opening statements by the Members of the Committee, many of the problems with the current law were listed all the way from lack of exemption authority of the Consumer Product Safety Commission to job loss. One of the best examples of the consequences of the CPSIA was the forced removal of brass musical instruments and microscopes from schools because they contain too much lead.

The Motorcycle Industry Council's (MIC) attorney gave testimony on why removing age appropriate models would be directly linked to greater injuries and that they need specific exemptions for youth motorcycles.

Several Members of the Committee agreed with the MIC that the ban on youth products with too much lead should not include the smaller motorcycles and ATVs.

The current law is flawed for many reasons but perhaps the best way to express it was said by George Radanovich (R-CA). He stated that "the FDA allows 1 microgram of lead per gram of candy, A toy maker wanted an exemption to the law but was denied. The toy he was seeking exemption for had less than 1 microgram of lead in a brass axle but it still exceed the consumer product safety levels."

Much work remains on this issue, but the hearing was a positive step in putting this issue to rest.

NHTSA's New Chief

The MRF also met with the new National Highway Traffic Safety Administration's new Administrator, David Strickland. ABATE of IL was in DC lobbying, so they put some pressure on former IL Member of Congress Ray LaHood to push a meeting request with the Administrator. LaHood, being a former MRF Champ winner, made it happen. The AMA also joined in on the productive meeting.

Recently at a US House hearing, Strickland commented that motorcycle helmet use should be the "core" of motorcycle safety programs so this meeting was especially important. During the meeting Strickland behaved as any government safety official would, he defended helmet law, saying he is a "data guy" and that he has to "follow the numbers". He also agreed that there are other aspects to motorcycle safety - one of the most important is education. The MRF congratulates Mr. Strickland on his post and we look

forward to working with him. Who knows, we may even see him on a motorcycle at some point as he expressed interest in learning to ride a motorcycle. We say "Go for it Administrator!"

Bikers Inside the Beltway

Don't forget to mark your calendars for the National Motorcycle Safety Month event in Washington, D.C. The date is set for May 20th, 2010 and will begin the day around 9 on the national mall. This will be a day of educating the Congress on the importance of motorcycle awareness and motorcycle safety. Contact the MRF office if you plan on attending or want more information.