AMERICAN MOTORCYCLIST ASSOCIATION

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AmericanMotorcyclist.com

August 9, 2010

Mr. David L. Strickland
Administrator
National Highway Traffic Safety Administration
1200 New Jersey Avenue, SE
West Building
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Administrator Strickland:

The American Motorcyclist Association (AMA) urges the National Highway Transportation Administration (NHTSA) to suspend the Motorcycle Law Enforcement Demonstration grant (DTNH22-10-R-00386) program until questions raised by the motorcycling community have been addressed.

Founded in 1924, the AMA is the premier advocate of the motorcycling community. We represent the interests of millions of motorcyclists and motorcycle enthusiasts nationwide. Our mission is to promote the motorcycle lifestyle and protect the future of motorcycling

The AMA has been following the New York State program's implementation of motorcycle-only safety checkpoints since its inception, and many questions remain unanswered regarding implementation, legality and efficacy. Indeed, on October 21, 2009, the AMA submitted a detailed list of questions to New York law enforcement officials regarding the motorcyclist-only stops in New York. To date, New York authorities have not responded.

While those questions remain unanswered, the uncertainty and controversy surrounding the New York State program regarding discriminatory law enforcement and lack of tangible safety enhancements have only compounded. Therefore, the AMA is providing your office with questions regarding the expansion of the New York program by initiating the Motorcycle Law Enforcement Demonstrations grant.

How do motorcycle only checkpoints increase the safety of motorcyclists? Where do the selected states draw their authority to conduct MOSCs? Will "probable cause" be required to stop a motorcycle under the terms of this grant program? If so, what will constitute probable cause? What types of infractions were recorded by law enforcement officials in New York at these traffic stops? And, what criteria will be used to determine if the MOSCs are successful?

The AMA continues to emphasize that the primary source of motorcycle safety is crash prevention. Motorcyclists in the United States would be much better served by spending federal dollars to augment other programming such as the Motorcycle Crash Causation Study, currently underway at Oklahoma State University, in order to develop effective and sustainable countermeasures to decrease the likelihood of crashes from occurring in the first place.

Because the New York program left so many unanswered questions and was perceived by many to have been discriminatory against riders, we urge the NHTSA to suspend the Motorcycle Law Enforcement Demonstration grant program until these questions have been addressed.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

Edward Moreland
Senior Vice President, Government Relations